In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent,
The Most Merciful

Al-Hajj Al-Mabrûr

By
Sheik Muhammad Mitwaly Ash-Sha‘râwy

[Hajj performed in accordance with the Prophet's tradition and is accepted by Allah]

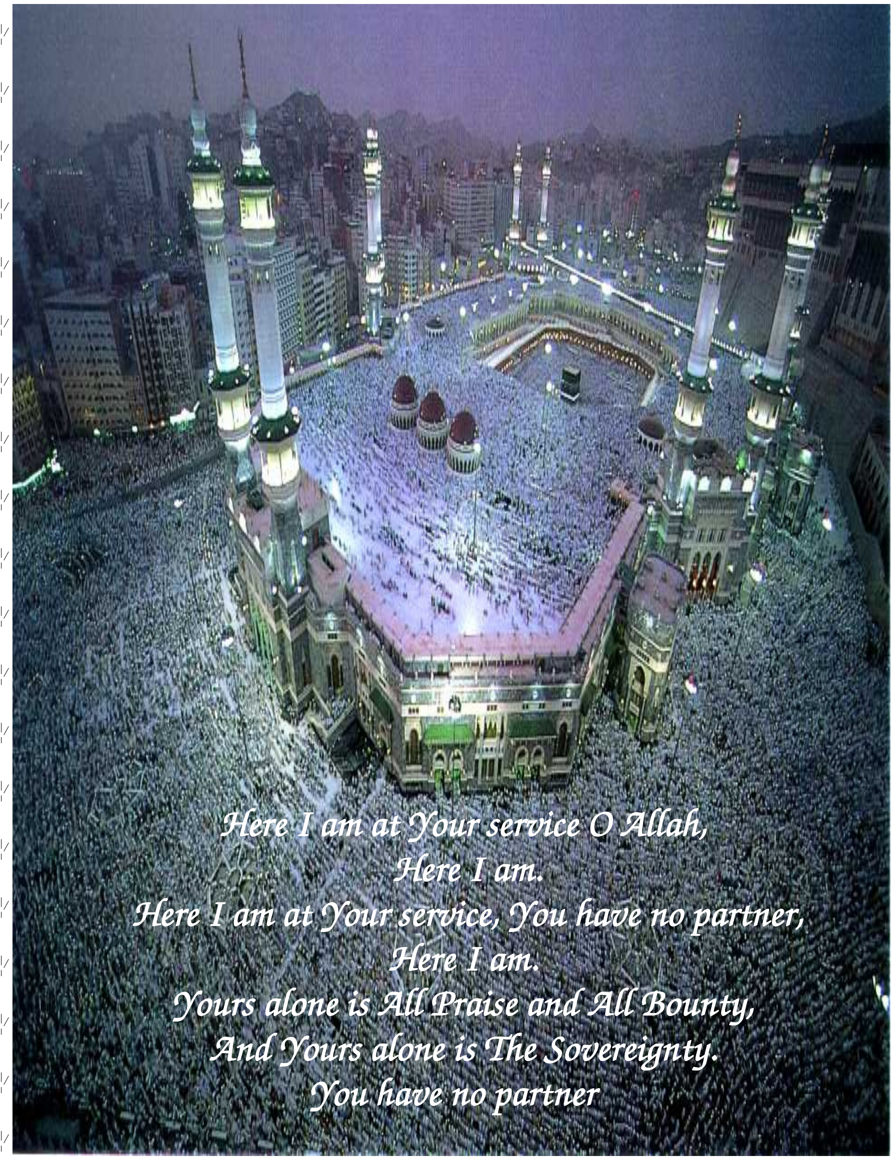

Here I am at Your service O Allah,
Here I am.
Here I am at Your service, You have no partner,
Here I am.
Yours alone is All Praise and All Bounty,
And Yours alone is The Sovereignty.
You have no partner

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Dedication

In the Name of Allah
The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful

Al-Hajj Al-Mabrûr

After praising Allah and praying for the bestowal of blessings and peace upon our master, the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad, I beg Allah that these issuing books from my library be a step taken on the path of guidance and a light that may illumine the way towards Faith and we pray for guidance and success from Allah.

Muhammad Mitwaly Ash-Shaʿrâwy

Introduction

The Islamic library of the venerable Sheik Ash-Sha'râwy Al-Hajj Al-Mabrûr

This book…

In the journey of ever continuous giving of the venerable Imam, Sheik Muhammad Mitwaly Al-Sha'râwy, are shining lights and inspirations that illumine the way of the seekers, guide the astray and teach humanity the religious matters that have been kept hidden from it.

Done for the Love of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and Islam by Abdullah translation group and as homage paid to our venerable Imam, Sheik Muhammad Mitwaly Ash-Sha'râwy.

Hajj…that sublime fifth Pillar of Islam, rich with far-reaching shoreless meanings, wisdoms, morals, philosophies and symbols; a rehearsal to the Day of Crowding, a great scene of equality where all privileges melt into thin air. In Hajj there is a reenactment of Prophet's Ibrâhîm (peace and blessings be upon him) firm stand against the black whispers of Satan. He stoned him seven times, a physical matter that agrees with our corporality, for us to learn that we should always stone the devil within ourselves in a nonphysical sense, barring all his gateways to us, by our defiance to yield to his satanic temptations until he recedes and leaves us dispossessed of all power over us.

All hajjis came answering the call of The Great Summoner – His Majesty, Allah, all praise and glory be to Him. All are standing before Allah just with a seamless piece of cloth on body like the shroud you shall come out of this world wrapped in.

Tawâf, Sa'y, Standing at 'Arafat, offering sacrifice, Zamzam…. and other Hajj rites, all have a wisdom and a moral, all teach a lesson that we should live by. Hajj with it majesty and the magnificence of worship in it is the hope of every Muslim to establish the Fifth Pillar of his Islam; hope of becoming a hajji, a traveler whose destination is the Sacred House of Allah and visiting His Messenger Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

Chapter One
<u>Here I am at Your Service, O Allah</u>

Each year by the advent of the Hajj season yearnings fill the hearts for visiting the Sacred House of Allah to perform the enjoined duty of Hajj and visit the grave of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), for the matchless spiritual joy it offers; feeling ever so close to Allah, and being wholeheartedly engaged with The Almighty; unmindful of all His other creatures, whether they are one's family, relatives, folks or other kindred.

The traveler to perform the enjoined duty of Hajj leaves everything behind and devotes himself to worshipping Allah. He leaves his family, his property, his friends and authority. He divests himself of his usual life to draw near Allah in *Salah* **[offering Prayers], Tawâf [The devotional act of circumambulating (i.e., walking around) the Ka'bah seven times while reciting prayers and supplications. Tawâf should begin and end at the Black Stone],** uttering *Talbiyah* **[A formula of answering Allah's Call for Hajj by saying: *Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik. Labbaik, La Shareek Laka, Labbaik. Innal Hamdah, Wan Nematah, Laka wal Mulk, La Shareek Laka Labbaik*: Here I am at Your service O Allah, here I am. Here I am at Your service, You have no partner, here I am. Yours alone is All Praise and All Bounty, and Yours alone is The Sovereignty. You have no partner],** *Dhikr* **[Remembrance of Allah through verbal or mental repetition of His Divine Attributes or various religious formulas, such as 'Subhân Allah,' meaning 'All Glory be to Allah']** and by celebrating His Praises.

He neither becomes tired nor bored, and he submits to Allah body and soul. His obedience to his Lord deepens day after day, whereby mercies are sent down upon the hearts, tears run down and man feels that the whole world and whatever in it has dwindled in front of drawing closer to The Almighty and winning His Good Pleasure.

Hajj is the fifth of the five Pillars of Islam, which Allah has enjoined on the able one; who has sufficient means (i.e., can afford the expenses for one's conveyance, provision and residence), health and power to perform it.

"And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka'bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allâh, those who can afford the expenses (for one's conveyance, provision and residence); and whoever disbelieves [i.e. denies Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah), then he is a disbeliever of Allâh], then Allâh stands not in need of any of the 'Alamîn (mankind and jinn)." (Âl-'Imrân, 3: 97)

Hajj, same as all the prerequisites of faith, is a bestowment of Godship not Lordship, for The Exalted and Ever-Majestic, blesses all His creatures with the provision that ensures their survival from food, water and shelter. But when it comes to faith The Almighty imposes duties only on those who believe in him, who pledged themselves to a faith commitment with Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, and said, 'O Allah! I believe in You, the One and Only creating God, so please show me how to worship You. Just command and I obey and forbid so that I dare not approach what You have forbidden.'

The pilgrim starts his journey by pronouncing *Talbiyah* (*Labbaik Allahuma Labbaik*, Here I am at your service, O Allah, here I am at your service). The essence of *Talbiyah* is answering the call of your Summoner – His Majesty, Allah, all praise and glory be to Him – who enabled you to go on a pilgrimage to His House and helped you with the expenses and power to do it. With *Talbiyah* you announce traveling in submission to the Command of Allah, Who graced you with the highest and greatest blessing, going on a pilgrimage to His Ancient House (the *Ka'bah* at Mecca).

After assuming the state of *Ih̲râm* **[The sacred state of practicing great self-denial into which a Muslim must enter before performing Hajj or 'Umrah, during which certain actions are forbidden (like having conjugal relations, shaving, cutting one's nails, and several other actions) nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly. In this sacred state the dress of Muslim pilgrims consists of two lengths of white cotton, one wrapped around the loins, the other thrown over the left shoulder. *Ih̲râm* clothes for women should fully cover the body except the face, hands and feet]** for performing Hajj, the pilgrim says, '*Labbaik Allahuma* (Here I am at your service, O Allah),' meaning, 'Here I am at the service of He Who imposed on me this ritual.' It conveys how far the soul welcomes the assigned duty and the serenity it now enjoys; a confession of cherishing and clinging to every duty enjoined by Allah.

Usually, duty weighs heavy on the soul because it confines the action of man by ordering him to do a certain act or forbid him from it, whether he accepts or dislikes the duty. Submission to the Command of Allah is a proof of the strength of faith, for the believer receives the duties enjoined by Allah with love, whether it is an order to do or a prohibition not to do.

The pilgrim leaves everything he is acquainted with: leaves his home, his country, his family, his children, his property, even the clothes he loves and many other things that Allah has made lawful for him. During his journey he divests himself of many things and show respect to the whole universe: inanimate beings, plants, animals and the rest of creatures.

He honors plants, never lays his hand on a tree to cut its branches. Birds he should not hunt any. The same with his fellow creatures, never to jeopardize his pilgrimage by disputing, as the noble Qur'anic verse instructs us:

"The *Hajj* (pilgrimage) is (in) the well-known (lunar year) months (i.e. the 10th month, the 11th month and the first ten days of the 12th month of the Islâmic calendar, i.e. two months and ten days). So whosoever intends to perform *Hajj* therein by assuming *Ihrâm*), then he should not have sexual relations (with his wife), nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly during the *Hajj*." (Al-Baqarah; 2: 197)

Hajj is well-known months

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, has restricted the free choice of man in the duties He enjoined, whether by time or place. There are acts of worship that Allah has not restricted either by time or place as the *Shahâdah* **[The testimony of Faith: Lâ ilâh illâ Allah wanâ Muhammadan rasûl Allah, There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah],** you swear once in your life and then repeat nighttime, daytime or in the forenoon, in your house, your work or on the road. It is unrestricted either by time or place.

As-Salah (offering Prayers), for instance, is an act of worship that Allah has restricted only by time and not by place. You can offer Prayers in any Masjid, in a factory, a house or a field. You are free to choose the place, but Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, has bound it by time. Every *Salah* (offered Prayer) has an assigned time, which makes its performance invalid except at the arrival of its prescribed time.

As for *Saum* (Fasting), Allah has prescribed its observance each year during the month of Ramadan but left a free choice of place. You can fast wherever you please and in any place on earth you choose.

As for the *Zakâh* (obligatory charity), Allah has restricted its time and amount but has not restricted its place. For instance, *Zakatul-Fiṯr* **[The Zakah of Fast-breaking, which is a certain amount of wheat, flour, fruits, barely or money to be paid to the poor at the end of Ramadan but before the Eid (Feast) Prayer]** should be paid at the end of Ramadan, whereas the *Zakâh* upon crops and fruits should be paid at harvest time, when the crops are still in the field and have not yet been transmitted for storage as verified by the Qur'anic Statement of The Most Exalted, saying (what means):

"And it is He Who produces gardens trellised and untrellised, and datepalms, and crops of different shape and taste (its fruits and its seeds) and olives, and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in taste). Eat of their fruit when they ripen, but pay the due thereof (its Zakât, according to Allâh's Orders 1/10th or 1/20th) on the day of its harvest, and waste not by extravagance. Verily, He likes not Al-Musrifûn (those who waste by extravagance)." (Al-An'âm, 6: 141)

As for the *Zakâh* upon money, it should be paid upon the money that reached the *Nisâb* **[Minimum amount of property liable to the payment of the Zakâh]** from year-end to year-end, meaning after the passage of a whole year on its acquisition; besides other types of the *Zakâh* that are restricted by time but unrestricted by place, because you have to pay the *Zakâh* wherever you are, unconditioned by any land or country.

As for Hajj, it differs from the rest of the acts of worship for being restricted by both time and place. You cannot perform Hajj while at home or in your country, but you have to go on a pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allah in Mecca. Also, on the Day of *'Arafah* you cannot stand anywhere, but you have to go to *'Arafah* **[The area that surrounds Mount Rahmah, southeast of Mecca]** on the ninth of *Dhu'l–Hijjah* **[The 12th month of the year in the Muslim calendar]** and stand at the specified place for standing, not to overstep it.

Further, you cannot perform the Hajj rituals at any month of the year but it must be on *Dhu'l–Hijjah*.

We thus learn that Hajj is the only enjoined duty restricted by both time and place. Therefore, its reward is the forgiveness of sins, for being one of the hardest enjoined duties on the believing soul. Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, says in His Noble Book (what means):

"And *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka'bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allâh, those who can afford the expenses (for one's conveyance, provision and residence)." (Âl-'Imrân, 3: 97)

We shall *Inshaallah* (by the Will of Allah) discuss this topic in detail in the next chapters.

Ibrâhîm proclaims the Hajj

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, asked the Prophet Ibrâhîm (Abraham, peace be upon him) to proclaim the Hajj to mankind. The Almighty says (what means):

"And proclaim to mankind the *Hajj* (pilgrimage). They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they will come from every deep and distant (wide) mountain highway (to perform *Hajj*)." (Al-Hajj, 22: 27)

Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) stood amidst this barren wasteland, wherein there is neither water nor plant, and none to hear him; nevertheless he proclaimed the Hajj in obedience to Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, Who said to him, 'Your duty is the proclamation and Ours is the conveyance.'

By the Infinite Power of Allah this call reached the hearing of all those destined to perform that sublime duty, since the proclamation of Ibrâhîm till the Day of Resurrection arrives. They heard the call of our father Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) while still in the loins of their forefathers and answered Him.

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, chose His Sacred House to be the *Qiblah* **[Direction faced in Prayers]** of the believers, which they face five times daily in each offered prayer. Thus, Allah willed that the believer's heart remains engaged with the Sacred House, though away from it, until he performs the enjoined duty of Hajj, whereby the blessing of having belief in Allah is perfected.

As though Allah psychologically prepares every Muslim to perform Hajj before doing it years ahead. Man may die without going on a pilgrimage but his heart keeps intimately attached to the Sacred House, turning to it five times a day.

Hajj is an enjoined duty whose fulfillment depends on many aspects of life; it demands effort, energy and Help from Allah by giving us power, ability and health. It also necessitates action, because man must work more to earn what exceeds his livelihood to be able to save the Hajj expenses. If he worked as hard as needed to suffice his daily living only he would save nothing for the Hajj. Therefore, the believer begs Allah for a working power that will suffice him and his family and cover his Hajj expenses as well.

All these arrangements related to health, work or energy, offer more than the actual need; all are certainly Blessings from Allah. When blessed by such grace, you should express gratitude to Allah by saying, ***'Here I am at your service, O Allah, here I am. Yours alone is All Praise and All Bounty, and Yours alone is The Sovereignty. You have no partner'***. All Praise is due to You for

providing me with the energy, the power and the means. Provided me with the money needed to cover my Hajj expenses and the maintenance of my family during my absence. All Praise is due to You for favoring me with all these blessings that I will never be fully able to pay You back for them in praises and thanks, no matter how endless thanks I give.

We have to carefully observe the accuracy of expression in the chant of Hajj, the pilgrim says, '***Here I am at your service, O Allah, here I am. Yours alone is All Praise and All Bounty, and Yours alone is The Sovereignty. You have no partner***'. The context would have dictated saying, '***Yours alone is All Bounty and All Praise***', for praises are only expressed for an offered bounty. But here the praise precedes the bounty, why? Because your thanksgiving is expressed for an already bestowed blessing, as Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, has graced you with all these blessings that enabled you to start your Hajj journey. So, you thank Allah for an already conferred blessing and for a coming one, that of belief, which made you fulfill that enjoined duty. Thus, blessings are continuously bestowed and gratitude is continuously expressed; we thank Allah for past and future blessings. Indeed, how endless and inexhaustible are the Blessings of Allah as substantiated by the noble Qur'anic verse saying (what means):

"Whatever is with you, will be exhausted, and whatever with Allâh (of good deeds) will remain. And those who are patient, We will certainly pay them a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do." (An-Nahl, 16: 96)

When reciting '*Talbiyah*', the pilgrim says, '***Yours alone is All Praise and All Bounty, and Yours alone is The Sovereignty,***' and as long as the Dominion and Sovereignty belong only to Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, and will always be, man should fear nothing in this world.

Allah says in the Sanctified Hadith:

"O son of Adam! Fear not those vested with power as long as My Sovereignty and kingdom never ends. Fear not the expiration of provision as long as My treasures are full never to empty. I have created everything for you and I have created you for My Sake, so proceed in My Obedience to have everything submitting to you. You owe Me dutifulness in what I have enjoined upon you, and I owe you sustenance, but if you disobey me in what I have enjoined, I will not deny you your sustenance. If you are contended with what I have ordained for you, I will relieve your heart, but if you are discontented with what I have ordained for you, by My Might and Majesty, I will empower this world against you, wherein you will run as beasts in the wilderness and you will not have of it except what I have ordained for you and you will be disparaged in My Eyes."

In Talbiyah, the words ***'You have no partner'*** settle in the heart of the believer the relief of knowing that Allah is the One and Only God. Allah wants to relieve and assure us that He is the One God with no other partner to oppose Him in His Will. This Oneness is a great blessing indeed for which we should heartily thank Allah. Surely, had there been a partner with Him, the earth would have been full of mischief and people's needs would have been wasted between a god that wants and another that denies.

The perfection of the Blessing of Allah

We have to observe that the Hajj is the only ritual that confers on the believer a special title. You neither call the one who observes *Salah* (offering Prayers) 'The prayer,' nor the one who pays the *Zakâh* (obligatory charity), 'The *Zakâh*-giver,' but we call the one who performed Hajj to the Sacred House of Allah, 'The hajji.'

The Hajj is the declaration of the perfection of the Blessings bestowed by Allah on man. The perfection of Allah's Blessings is in having the bestowments of Godship together with that of Lordship, because you did not perform the Hajj except by the power Allah has given you, through the blessings of Lordship. When people call out, 'The hajji so and so,' we learn that Allah has greatly graced him. The Almighty graced him with the blessing of belief in Him, which is the supreme blessing, and belief in the last of all the Prophets, Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Since man decided to make a pilgrimage he must be observant of all the other duties enjoined on him: *Salah* (offering prayers), paying the *Zakâh* (obligatory charity) and observing *Saum* (Fasting). By performing the Hajj he wishes to fulfill the Five Pillars of Islam, to be among those to whom Allah has addressed this noble Qur'anic verse, revealed in the Farewell Hajj **[The first and the last Hajj performed by the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace]** saying (what means):

"This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islâm as your religion." (Al-Mâ'idah, 5: 3)

Meaning, I have perfected and fulfilled all the Pillars of Islam; fulfilled the *Salah* (offering Prayers) by visiting the Sacred House to perform prayers therein. *Zakâh*, for Hajj includes it, being an act of worship relying on both financial means and physical ability, where you spend your money for the Sake of Allah. *Saum* (Fasting), for Hajj includes a sort of fasting because you forbear from bodily desires while assuming the state of *Ihrâm.* First and foremost, the Hajj embraces the *Shahâdah* **[The testimony of Faith: 'Ashadu anâ Lâ ilâh illâ Allah wanâ Muhammad rasûl Allah' I testify that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah]**.

You come on a pilgrimage in servile compliance with the Command of Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, and out of showing obedience to Him, and you perform the Hajj rituals as the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) has taught us.

The worship of Allah dictates avoidance of assuming superiority over one another. On going to the Masjid to offer prayers equality dictates that whoever arrives first sits first, regardless of his rank, wealth, poverty or his status in this world, as you may find the doorman in the first row and the building owner in the last row.

Such equality in worshipping Allah, The Most Exalted, purges the soul from superiority and causes it to humble itself. It makes us all feel that we are standing in front of God, Who neither looks at our shapes nor appearances, but at our hearts; the criterion between a human and another whatever be our mentalities or living standards.

In each Congregational Prayer performed in one of the Masjids of Allah, equality, submission and humility shown to Allah is done in a limited medium. But Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, willed that such equality and submission be shown not only in a limited medium but in a global one; in a universal environment gathering all the races of the earth; the strong and weak nations, people of power and wealth together with those owning nothing. Each should humble himself as becomes the solemnity of the Hajj.

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, wants to inculcate in us the rudiments of such a standing: that we all differ in our outfits, appearances and garments according to the living standards of each and our different tastes in choosing the fabrics we wear and their designs. In Hajj, Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, wants none to be distinguished, neither in appearance nor dress.

We may differ as we please in our own countries among our folk, but here and on arriving to the Sacred House of Allah we have to stand as equals before Him, as He created us, and as we shall stand before Him on the Day of Resurrection.

He wants us servants of His, wearing the same dress none differing from the other. To divest ourselves of worldly comforts and give up our posts the time we reach the borders of the Sacred House, where all privileges melt into thin air. The seamless *Iḫrâm* garments are worn and all abide by the same dress and fabric. With such abidance imposed by Allah vanishes the first sign of distinction and superiority in worn clothes and assumed posts.

Reverence shown to the species of the universe

As Almighty Allah has taken man away from his family, children and property he is attached to and the luxury and the lifestyle he is used to, and as He detached him from special clothes, He obliged him to honor all the species of the universe. With inanimate beings, he is to kiss *Al-Hajarul-Aswad* **['The Black Stone' is a stone from Paradise. It was set into one corner of the Ka'bah in Mecca by Prophet Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him). The Black Stone was personally installed in the wall of the Ka`bah by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) himself during its reconstruction following its destruction by a flash flood. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also kissed it during his Farewell Hajj. Thus, touching and kissing *Al-Hajarul-Aswad* during `Umrah and Hajj is considered Sunnah and an act of obedience. Muslims do not worship the Black Stone. The only reason to kiss the Black Stone is that our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) kissed it]** or point towards it; with plants, not to cut a tree; with animals, not to hunt any; and with humans, he neither quarrels nor disputes. Thus Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, teaches man to treat with deference all the species of the universe.

During this blessed journey, man learns how to waive his pride and mastery in this universe before its humblest species – inanimate beings – and kisses it or jostles against the others to kiss it. None is great by selfhood but true greatness is achieved when making your free will harmonious, concordant and agreeing with the Will of Allah and His Set Law.

Through this ultimate Pillar of the Five Pillars of Islam Allah tells His servant to respect all the species of the universe, for mastery is not self-given to man but attained by virtue of the preference Allah gave him above others species.

You must carefully consider what this ritual demands from you and to deeply muse upon it in order to know what Allah wants you to do. To grasp that the purport lies in Command, belief and submission, for Allah is the One Who commanded us to kiss that stone and to stone another! Neither in kissing or stoning is a preference for this or that stone, but it is an obedience shown to the Command of Allah. Therefore, it does not submit to the philosophies of the mind but rather to the obedience of Faith.

As aforesaid, the Hajj journey starts with *Talbiyah*, which is a response to the call of the Prophet Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) when he proclaimed the Hajj to mankind. After it you must divest yourself of pride. To take off your rich clothes and forsake the home specially prepared to give you comfort. Children, friends, relatives, power and property, you leave all behind and go to the Sacred House of Allah, practicing self-denial and assuming *Ihrâm*. Leaving the world behind you, just with a seamless piece of cloth on your body like the shroud you shall come out of this world wrapped in.

Tears shed at the Sacred House

When you enter the Sacred House of Allah and you circumambulate it tears fill your eyes, why?

Many people do not know the reason, but crying before such a scene is an expression of waiving the pride that accompanied you for long. The more tears you shed, the more pride you rid yourself of. If crying is a sign of weakness and grief, in the Hajj it is not so.
It is a sense of submission and servility, a sense that you gave up all and realized your true humble rank. You come to this sacred place hoping to express your regret for your misdeeds and supplicate Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, that He may forgive your past and future sins.

Being so close to The Almighty and experiencing a sense of His Presence every second is what imparts to the shed tears a spirituality that surpasses joy. The joy of being purged from sins; the joy of winning the Good Pleasure of Allah deeply felt and realized; the joy of confessing sins, which means having the strength of will never to relapse again by holding fast to repentance.

It is the power of faith that prompts man to abandon all wrongdoing and perversity that may taint his creed and behavior. Renouncing pride is a show of strength, and begging for mercy and forgiveness is also a show of strength.

Everyone who experienced such overwhelming feelings knows well that his soul is relieved after crying. As though the tears that flowed from his eyes cleansed his heart. Everyone cries as bitterly as he transgressed against himself (by committing evil deeds and sins) and as bitterly as he disobeyed.

What arouses wonder is that after your soul obtained relief you yearn again to return to what draws your tears. You come back to the Hajj for a second and a third time, but never would you cry as you did the first time. In the first time, you shed bitter violent tears, but less in the second, and lesser in the third, why?

Because in every time you grow more serene and more upright in the adopted course of your life; the moment you enter the Sacred Masjid and see the *Ka'bah* you become preoccupied with yourself alone, forgetting about anything else. Preoccupied with how you will offer Prayers, perform *Tawâf* and *Sa'y* **[The devotional act of walking seven times between the knolls of As-Safâ and Al-Marwah which are located some distance from the Ka'bah inside Al-Masjidul-Haram; starting at As-Safâ and ending at Al-Marwa]**. What will you beg for and what invocations will you utter. You are totally taken by Allah from whatever surrounds you and as long as you are preoccupied with The Creator, Whose Majesty reigns supreme, there will be no room in your heart for anything else besides Him. Even your children will not cross your mind except at the end of the rituals, which arouses people's wonder, though there is nothing to wonder about.

Glorification of the Ka'bah

Some people say that Islam has forbidden intermingling between men and women, so why is not it forbidden in *Tawâf*? We see men and women performing *Tawâf* where hardly anyone passes without exerting a tremendous effort, due to the overcrowding. To those people we say that every circumambulator (performer of *Tawâf*) is preoccupied with what he/she is deeply in.

There, desires retreat and evil insinuations (whispered by the devil) vanish; each is no longer aware of those around him, each is preoccupied with Allah, preoccupied with worshipping Him, preoccupied with himself.

When offering prayers in the Sacred House of Allah, you find that all the directions faced in *Salah* have mixed, how? When offering Prayers in the Masjids located in our countries some of us may turn eastward, others westward, northward or southward governed by our position from the *Ka'bah*. But on arriving at the Sacred House of Allah we no longer abide by these directions.

Is it permissible for me, inside a Masjid in Egypt, to offer Prayers while facing the Yamani Corner **[The southern corner of the Ka'bah]**? Do I observe that when I go to the *Ka'bah*, to look for the Yamani Corner and offer prayers facing it? No, I can offer Prayers while facing any of the corners of the *Ka'bah* and bear in my mind the Qur'anic verse saying (what means):

"And to Allâh belong the east and the west, so wherever you turn yourselves or your faces there is the Face of Allâh (and He is High above, over His Throne)." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 115)

That is the magnificence of worship.

While in the Sacred House of Allah, you have the entire *Ka'bah* before you, and you must glorify every place in it and every part of it, which will not be done except by circumambulating it.

An opinion says that it is enough to perform *Tawâf* once to fulfill that purpose, but the *Ka'bah* is parable to *Al-Baitul-Ma'mûr* (The Oft-frequented House) **[The house in the seventh firmament directly above the Ka'bah at Mecca; everyday it is visited by seventy thousands angels, who never revisit it until the Day of Judgment]**. If you keep ascending the sky of the *Ka'bah* you will end at *Al-Baitul-Ma'mûr.*

Those offering prayers at the third floor in the Meccan Sanctuary are higher than the altitude of the *Ka'bah* itself but they face its atmosphere. The air expanse above the *Ka'bah* represents the *Ka'bah* up to *Al-Baitul-Ma'mûr* in the seventh heaven.

If you are boarding a plane heading for the *Ka'bah* you will offer Prayer in it while having your face turned to the sky of the *Ka'bah*. The heavens are seven, and to those who believe that by circumambulating the *Ka'bah* once you glorify all its parts we say: Follow the example of *Al-Mi'râj* (Ascension) **[The miraculous ascension of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, from Jerusalem up to the Heavens to meet his Lord]**. If you complete seven *ashwaat* **[One complete circuit around the Ka'bah constitutes a shawt (pl. ashwaat), and seven ashwaat complete one Tawâf]** around the *Ka'bah*, as though you have ascended the seven heavens provided that serenity and light fill your heart.

That is the Grace of Allah, He bestows on whom He wills. Indeed, endless is the Grace of Allah, The Bestower, Whose Blessings cover all creatures.

Chapter Two
The Maqâm of Ibrâhîm

The Maqâm (Station) of Ibrâhîm (Abraham, peace be upon him): **[The step-stone used by Prophet Ibrâhîm during the original construction of the Ka'bah. The stone carries the imprints of his feet, and is housed in a glass enclosure on the north side of the Ka'bah].**

Before discussing Hajj, we have to give a glimpse at the history of the Sacred House. Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, says in His Noble Book (what means):

"Verily, the first House (of worship) appointed for mankind was that at Bakkah (Makkah), full of blessing, and a guidance for Al-'Alamîn (the mankind and jinns)." (Âl-'Imrân, 3: 96)

The history of establishment is depicted as follows: the House was placed for mankind (to worship Allah) since the time of Âdam (peace be upon him) till the Last Hour befalls. Its Author is Allah, all praise and glory be to Him; He is the One Who established it and appointed its place. Since it was placed to mankind, then it must have existed before people were brought into being. It was placed at the creation of the universe, for Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, willed to make a House of His, whereto Âdam (peace be upon him) and his offspring would go on a pilgrimage, and Âdam (peace be upon him) complied.

Some people ascribe the establishment of the House to the Prophet Ibrâhîm (Abraham, peace be upon him); that he built it by the Command of Allah. We ask those people to carefully understand the Words of Allah. The House was placed for mankind means that the Sacred House existed before Âdam (peace be upon him). Ibrâhîm was assigned the duty of raising the foundations effaced after the flood that drowned the earth during the era of Nûh.

But Allah commanded Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) to take his wife, Hâjar (peace be upon her), and his son, Ismâ'îl (Ishmael, peace be upon him), to a barren arid valley near the Sacred House.

Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, says in His Noble Book (what means):

"And (remember) when We showed Ibrâhim (Abraham) the site of the (Sacred) House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) (saying): 'Associate not anything (in worship) with Me, [Lâ ilâha ill-Allâh (none has the right to be worshipped but Allâh Islâmic Monotheism], and sanctify My House for those who circumambulate it, and those who stand up for prayer, and those who bow (submit themselves with humility and obedience to Allâh), and make prostration (in prayer, etc.).'" (Al-Hajj, 22: 26)

The location of the House was shown and specified to Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him). Regarding the Sacred House, Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, says when recounting the invocation of Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) what means:

"O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in an uncultivable valley by Your Sacred House (the Ka'bah at Makkah); in order, O our Lord, that they may perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), so fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allâh) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks." (Ibrahîm, 14: 37)

Ibrâhîm took his wife Hâjar and their son Ismâ'îl, who was still an infant, and left them near the Sacred House appointed by Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, since the beginning of creation. But what was the role of Ibrâhîm and what did he do?

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, ordered Ibrâhîm to raise the foundations of the House (the Ka'bah at Mecca); to raise a construction high on the earth to guide people to the place of the House, so that people know that this is the Sacred House of Allah and that is its whereabouts.

The Ka'bah…the sign of the Sacred House

People should know that the Sanctified *Ka'bah* is not the Sacred House of Allah, but the sign indicating that in this place stands the Sacred House of Allah, as established by the Qur'anic verse in which The Most Exalted says (what means):

"And (remember) when Ibrâhim (Abraham) and (his son) Ismâ'il (Ishmael) were raising the foundations of the House (the Ka'bah at Makkah)." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 127)

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, made Ismâ'îl help his father, Ibrâhîm, in raising the foundations of the House. Thus, Ibrâhîm only built up the foundations when Ismâ'îl grew up, to be a helping hand to his father.

Some people believe that the Sacred House is the *Ka'bah,* which is incorrect. The Sacred House is the place where the *Ka'bah* was built. There is a difference between the place and the sign indicating it, a sign firmly established. Every space has length, width, and then comes the third dimension, the height. What Ibrâhîm did was to raise the foundations, i.e., to establish the height. At the place of the Sacred House, Ibrâhîm made his wife Hâjar and their infant son, Ismâ'îl, dwell.

Benison is in the Sacred House

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, describes His House as blessed, and the blessing lies when a thing offers more than expected.

For instance, when man cultivates wheat, where the acre usually yields five Irdabbs **[A standard measure that equals 25128 grams]**, but it gives him fifteen Irdabbs, we say it is a blessing. So, there are bounties and there is what surpasses bounties.

The Sacred House is full of blessings: the blessing of winning the Good Pleasure of Allah, the blessing of refraining from harming people, the blessing of having your soul filled with faith, the blessing of fearing Allah and the blessing of killing pride in the soul. Without regard to social status, every human being in the Sacred House of Allah is equal to his fellow humans. Only in that House is the blessing that every *Salah* (offered Prayer) is worth the reward of a hundred thousand offered prayers and the blessing of multiplying the good deeds. Moreover, if the *Salah* is worth a hundred thousand offered prayers, a good deed is also worth a hundred thousand good deeds, whereas in places other than the Sacred House of Allah, it is worth tenfold the like thereof.

From amongst the blessings also is the hospitality of people; millions of Muslims visit Mecca to perform Hajj and no matter how highly prepared Mecca was, it would not have accommodated all those people who come from the five continents of the world and from every deep distant mountain pass to perform Hajj, if it were not for that blessing. The hearts show magnanimity and places as well, so we may find ten people sleeping comfortably in a single room, whereas outside Mecca if two people slept in the same room they would feel discomforted.

The blessing of the Hajj is that you avoid all sins. Indeed, every moment passing on you without sinning is itself a blessing. In the Hajj, Allah blesses all your times, you do nothing but kind acts, and the performance of good deeds therein is endlessly and infinitely multiplied.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: ***"The reward of Hajj Mabrûr (the one accepted by Allah) is nothing other than Paradise."***

An endless blessing extending from worldly life to the hereafter, for Allah wants man to abide by His Divine Law and no time man lives abiding by His Law as that of Hajj. Before hearing the *Azân* **[The Muslim summons to prayer, called by the muezzin from a minaret of a Masjid five times a day]** the Muslim hurries to the Sacred House of Allah and keeps offering prayers, glorifying the Praises of Allah and reciting the Noble Qur'an. He shies away from any sin or missing the Congregational Prayers or failing to dedicate himself to the obedience of Allah.

The Truth [*Al-Haqq*: one of the Beautiful Names of Allah], Blessed and Exalted be He, says (what means):

"Verily, the first House (of worship) appointed for mankind was that at Bakkah (Makkah), full of blessing, and a guidance for Al-'Alamîn (the mankind and jinns)." (Âl-'Imrân, 3: 96)

Al-'Alamîn is the plural of (the Arabic word) *'Âlam* (world), indicating all, except Allah. It includes different species as the world of the angels, that of the jinn, that of mankind and so forth. The aimed at meaning is that faith is strewn throughout the entire universe among all the species of the earth, and during the Hajj season all these species gather in the Sacred House of Allah. The Truth, Whose Majesty reigns supreme, says (what means):

"In it are manifest signs (for example), the Maqâm (place) of Ibrâhim (Abraham); whosoever enters it, he attains security." (Âl-'Imrân, 3: 96)

What are the manifest signs?

What are the manifest signs present in the House? The only stated in the Noble Qur'an is the verse in which The Most Exalted says (what means), '***The Maqâm (place) of Ibrâhim (Abraham).'*** Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, wants to direct our attention to that *Maqâm*, which is a stone on which Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) used to stand while raising the foundations of the Ka'bah. Ibrâhîm could have raised the foundations of the Ka'bah in the height of his body, but his love of the religion and the duty assigned to him by Allah made him bring a stone so as to elevate the foundations higher.

Allah, glory be to Him, says that in the House are, ***'Manifest signs,'*** which is plural, whereas ***'The Maqâm (place) of Ibrâhim (Abraham),'*** came singular. Through a profound comprehension of the meaning, you will find many signs in *Maqâm Ibrâhim*, because on contemplating any blessing endless blessings are revealed. The Truth, Blessed and Exalted be He, says (what means):

"And if you count the Bounty of Allâh, never will you be able to reckon it." (Ibrâhîm, 14: 34)

The Almighty says (in the aforementioned verse) *Bounty* and has not said *Bounties*, because a bounty embosoms many blessings. Similarly, in *Maqâm Ibrâhim* are many signs; first that Ibrâhîm fulfilled the enjoined duty with profound adoration and love, shown in his strong desire to elevate the House, enhance it and perfect it. He saved no effort for accomplishing that end.

Certainly, carrying out one's work with perfection is a sign bespeaking your love of it, which is one of the secrets behind the magnificence of the universe. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ***"Allah loves when any of you performs a work to perfect it."***

If Allah, The Most Exalted, says (what means), ***"In it are manifest signs (for example), the Maqâm (place) of Ibrâhim (Abraham)," (Âl-'Imrân, 3: 96)*** we have to see through it the signs exiting in *Maqâm Ibrâhim*. Ibrâhîm was a nation, having of good righteous attributes what may only gather in a nation. For goodness cannot gather in a single person but only in a nation: one is trustworthy, another is honest and a third is generous. Yet, all the good righteous attributes gathered in the Prophet Ibrâhim (peace be upon him).

Because Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) loved the enjoined duty, he endured the trials Allah had put him through; he succeeded and fulfilled the duty the best that can ever be. Recite the Qur'anic verse in which Allah, praise be to Him, says (what means):

"And (remember) when the Lord of Ibrâhim (Abraham) [i.e., Allah] tried him with (certain) Commands, which he fulfilled." (Al-Baqarah, 2:124)

What are the Commands that Allah tried Ibrâhîm with? Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, commanded him to slaughter his son Ismâ'îl, his sole son, who attained adulthood. How did Ibrâhîm respond to the Divine Command? Did he slacken in executing it? Did he invoke Allah to mercy his old age and pardon his only son? No, despite the severity of the trial he started execution. This presents a sign for you to fulfill the enjoined duty and endure the trial with utmost complacence.

Another sign is unveiled at the construction of the Ka'bah: Ibrâhîm wanted to fulfill the Decree of Allah in raising the foundations of the Ka'bah not as his capability allows him – as aforesaid – but he contrived to boost his capability and brought a stone so that the foundations may tower as high as that stone. If you look at the stone, that lies few meters away for the Ka'bah, you will find footprints. They say that when Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) stood upon the stone it humbled itself and softened, imprinting on it surface his footprints. Another view suggests that Ibrâhîm contrived to secure a foothold, so that when he stands upon the stone he remains stable and does not lose his balance.

All are signs showing that we should accept the duties Allah enjoins on us and perform them perfectly and lovingly, why? Because perfection and high fidelity spread the Blessings of Allah in existence; when you see something done perfectly it will inspire you as well as others to exclaim in admiration, '*Allah*.' Certainly, those who do not perfect their work have deprived existence from the perception of beauty in this world. Allah, praise be to Him, is the Source of beauty, He, praise be to Him, is Beautiful, loves beauty.

Whoever enters it is safe

The Truth, Blessed and Exalted be He, says (what means), ***"In it are manifest signs (for example), the Maqâm (place) of Ibrâhim (Abraham); whosoever enters it, he attains security." (Âl-'Imrân, 3: 96)*** Meaning, none should be attacked, which represents a universal as well as a judicial issue.

Some skeptics say that during the time of the *Qarâmitah* **[Karmathians. At first this was a revolutionary deviant movement of early Isma'ili inspiration, deriving its name from an Isma'ili leader called Hamdan Qarmat. There were groups of Qaramitah in the Syrian Desert, Al-Kufa and Bahrain.**

Their most audacious and sacrilegious act, from a theological perspective, was to seize Black Stone from the Ka'bah, only returning it some 22 years later] some people entered the House seeking refuge and asking for security, but in spite of that Ibn Qarmat entered the House and killed the people therein.

The incident also recurred years ago from *Al-Jahmiyah* **[A deviant sect attributed to Jahm bin Safwân]**, then what is the meant security and why was not it fulfilled in these two examples?

The Qur'anic verse saying (what means), ***"Whosoever enters it, he attains security" (Âl-'Imrân, 3: 96)***, is an enjoined Divine Command, liable to be obeyed or disobeyed. Whoever obeys the enjoined Divine Command will grant security to those who enter the Sacred House of Allah, and whoever disobeys it will deny granting security to those who enter it. The incident does not contradict the stated Qur'anic verse because we are confronted with a universal issue that happened, as well as a judicial one, having to do with obedience and violation.

Just as Allah orders His servants to offer prayers, pay the *Zakâh* (obligatory charity) and observe *Saum* (Fasting), He orders them to secure whoever enters His Sacred House. It is a judicial issue, obeyed by those who follow the Law of Allah and disobeyed by those who violate it. The obeying should guard the safety of those present inside the Sanctuary just as Allah has ordered, which necessitates that each person should show leniency; neither quarrels nor argues, nor commits whatever may cause dissension or provoke conflicts.

"Whosoever enters it, he attains security," a command to secure whoever enters it. There is a group assigned to assure the security of whoever enters the Sacred House of Allah.

But it is not an individual responsibility but a general one assumed by guards who prevent the spread of chaos, disorder, riot or propagation of a foreign doctrine inside the Sanctuary. Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, says regarding the Sacred House (what means):

“And whoever inclines to evil actions therein or to do wrong (i.e. practise polytheism and leave Islâmic Monotheism), him We shall cause to taste a painful torment.” (Al-Hajj, 22: 25)

Meaning whoever fights in the Sanctuary must be seized with a painful torment in the life of this world and in the hereafter. In worldly life, he must receive the painful torment of being killed not fought. His surrender is not accepted, but he must be killed for abusing the safety of the Sanctuary he is obliged to guard and respect as Allah has commanded. Whereas in the hereafter Allah will punish him with a painful torment that meets the atrocity of his crime. The Truth, all praise and glory be to Him, says (what means):

“And (remember) when We made the House (the Ka‘bah at Makkah) a place of resort for mankind and a place of safety. And take you (people) the *Maqâm* (place) of Ibrâhim (Abraham) [or the stone on which Ibrâhim (Abraham) stood while he was building the Ka'bah] as a place of prayer (for some of your prayers, e.g. two *Rak'at* after the *Tawâf* of the Ka'bah at Makkah).” (Al-Baqarah, 2: 125)

The House was made a resort; means a place people turn to as recourse, where they turn to Allah in repentance. As long as the servant returns to Allah and keeps practicing the Rituals and Laws of Allah throughout a period of time, his soul will get used to obedience, and when it does he will continue abiding by it. Back in his country he will shy away from ever sinning.

Among the rituals Allah prescribed in Hajj and ‘Umrah are matters connected with issues governing the entire universe. After *Tawâf* **[The devotional act of circumambulating (i.e. walking around) the Ka‘bah seven times while reciting prayers and supplications. Tawâf should begin and end at the Black Stone]** you perform Sa‘y **[The devotional act of walking seven times between the knolls of As-Safâ and Al-Marwah, which are located some distance from the Ka‘bah inside Al-Masjidul-Haram; starting at As-Safâ and ending at Al-Marwa]**. Sa‘y is done between *As-Safâ* and *Al-Marwah*, the two knolls between which you walk for seven *ashwaat* **[One complete circuit around the Kabah constitutes a shawt (pl. ashwaat), and seven ashwaat complete one Tawaf],** as in *Tawâf*.

Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, wants us during the performance of this ritual to summon in our minds an issue of faith, namely that Allah has created this universe and made it work through causes. Whoever adopts the causes of living – whether a believer or a nonbeliever – and masters them, causes will give him. But at the same time The Almighty wants to invite our attention that The Originator of causes, glory be to Him, is above all causes. Allah gives (of His Bounties, Blessings, Favors, Honors, etc.) to whomever He wills without end. He, glory be to Him, guides you to the causes and means of obtaining provision; if you succeed in adopting them, they will give you and if you do not, they will not. But never believe that causes alone are the givers. You adopt the causes and if Allah wills they will give you, meanwhile your heart should wholly be with the Creator of the causes.

There is a difference between the Bounties Allah gives through causes and those directly bestowed. In Hajj Allah draws our attention to that.

He made us perform *Sa'y* between *As-Safâ* and *Al-Marwah* to remind us of the story of Hâjar (may Allah be pleased with her) and her son Ismâ'îl (Ishmael, peace be upon him), when Ibrâhîm (Abraham, peace be upon him) brought them to this place wherein there is neither plant, nor water, nor any means of survival.

In this place bare of survival means, Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) left his wife and his infant son to direct our attention to a principle governing this universe. When Ibrâhîm hurried back Hâjar (may Allah be pleased with her) laid hold of the reins of his riding animal and said, ***'To whom are you leaving us?'*** but Ibrâhîm did not answer back. Then Hâjar said, ***'Allah ordered you so?'*** and he beckoned to her affirmatively, so she said, ***'Then He will never leave us be lost.'***

That is the first principle of faith: if Allah settled you in a place, He will never let you be lost, however powerless are all causes and means to offer you anything.

What did Hâjar do? She submitted to the Decree of Allah and contented herself with it. Then what happened? Her baby thirsted and she wanted to water him. She must adopt means and look for a spring, or a well, or a walking caravan that has water. She must exert utmost effort and ascends *Al-Marwah* knoll to get a better view of her surroundings, perhaps she might find a tree, or a bird, or some people. Hâjar hurried to *As-Safâ* knoll but she neither found water nor a trace of life, so she returned again to *Al-Marwah* knoll but she found nothing. Then she returned to *As-Safâ* then to *Al-Marwah* and she kept running between them until she repeated the act seven times, but she found nothing. Her runs between *As-Safâ* and *Al-Marwah* were the utmost effort she could exert and she could do no more, so she sat beside her infant after her own means ran out, but behold the little infant's leg struck the ground and water gushed forth!!

Hâjar adopted the causes but they offered her nothing, whereas the weak infant struck the ground gently with his little foot and the water sprouted. If she had found a caravan passing by, or a nearby spring, the parable would not have been completed.

Allah wanted to have all the acts of that event be completed to call our attention to this universal issue, that is, if earthly means ended, do not despair, Allah, praise be to Him, will never abandon you. He is The Sayer and His Statement is the absolute truth (the Qur'anic verse that means):

"Is not He (better than your gods) Who responds to the distressed one, when he calls Him, and Who removes the evil, and makes you inheritors of the earth, generations after generations." (An-Naml, 27: 62)

This serves to strengthen the believer and make him never lose hope, because he has a Mighty Support to shelter himself under, but the nonbeliever – Allah forbid – when he despairs, he commits suicide. When the believer despairs, he knows for sure that he has with him the Lord Who will never abandon him. Every pilgrim returns having this principle settled in his heart: the parable of Hâjar and her infant son Ismâ'îl, causes and The Originator of causes, so a believer receives all the hardships of life firmly, resolutely and hopefully.

Truly, Allah loves from amongst His servants the trusting, who would never let go the Hand of Allah stretched out to him with means and causes. Whenever they fail to give, The Lord of all means and causes surely will.

Free choice and specific enjoined duties

We have to pay attention that in Hajj man steps outside the scope of general free choice to that of specific enjoined duties, so he cannot overpass any of the places The Legislator has specified to him without being in a state of *Ihrâm* **[The sacred state of practicing great self-denial into which a Muslim must enter before performing Hajj or 'Umrah, during which certain actions are forbidden (like having conjugal relations, shaving, cutting one's nails, and several other actions) nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly. In this sacred state the dress of Muslim pilgrims consists of two lengths of white cotton, one wrapped around the loins, the other thrown over the left shoulder. *Ihrâm* clothes for women should fully cover the body except the face, hands and feet.]** The essence of *Ihrâm* is the abandonment of vain choices to an abidance by the faith commitments dictated by Allah.

For instance, there is the *Mîqat* **[The place where pilgrims declare their intentions to perform Hajj or 'Umrah and assume the state of Ihrâm]**, which is the place separating between the sacred precincts of Mecca and the land outside them. Outside the *Mîqat* you are not governed by special rules that restrict your movement, but inside it you are within the sacred precincts, which you cannot enter except in a state of *Ihrâm*.

In the Hajj man submits to new enjoined duties. A fact arousing wonder is that the locations of the *Mîqat* are not geometrically specified in a way that makes their dimensions equally separated from the Ka'bah. The distance of the *Mîqat* for the people of Hejaz, wherein is the Sacred House, is the longest among all *Mîqat*s. Whoever enters from Medina to perform Hajj must assume *Ihrâm* from the location called *Abar 'Ali*. The distance from *Abar 'Ali* to Mecca is 450 km. On the other hand, the *Mîqat* of *Râbigh* is 204 km, *Al-Juhfa* 187 km, *Al-Irâq* 94 km and *Yalamlam* 54 km.

Therefore, the specification of the *Mîqats* is not a geometrical process for you to learn that it is not a matter of calculations but a matter that wholly submits to the absolute dispensation of the Divine Will. It is hard for the mind to grasp the wisdom behind the enjoined duties. For instance, we perform *Wudu'* (Ablution) to offer *Salah* (Prayers). Some people believe that *Wudu'* is cleanliness or purity. To them we say it is not a matter of cleanliness or purity, because in case you do not find water you perform *Tayammum* **[To put or strike lightly the hands over clean earth and then pass the palm of each on the back of the other, blow off the dust and then pass them on the face. This is performed instead of Wudu' (ablution) in the absence of water or when one is unable to use water because of illness]** with clean dust. So, do not judge that *Wudu'* is cleanliness because Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, has a wisdom we are ignorant of.

If we step inside the *Mîqat* we move from the place of choice to that of abidance, where we no longer wear sewn clothes, perfumes, neither shave our beards nor heads, nor dispute. All these commands are addressed to those who have crossed the *Mîqat*. Whoever has crossed it, has committed himself.

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, The Enjoiner, has prescribed a special conduct for the pilgrim. You are the one who engaged yourself in these enjoined duties, which constitutes a practice on self-restraint and the choice you made to win the Good Pleasure of Allah. In return, Allah bestows on you endless forgiveness and grace, especially if you approached the Hajj rituals out of faith; meaning that you do not first ask for knowledge of the wisdom behind every deed enjoined on you, but you perform the deed because it is simply enjoined by Allah. If performed, it would fill your heart with tranquility, relief and contentment. That is the difference between the duty imposed by humans on humans and the duty imposed by The Truth on His creatures.

If a compeer assigned to you a duty, you would wonder why should I do that thing? But with Allah, you receive the assigned duty with the obedience that tantamount to your trust in His Knowledge and your love to Him. You do not ask why should I do that? But rather you ask if Allah is the One Who judged so. For Allah wants nothing for us but goodness and decree nothing but good. Goodness, the more your reasoning power was incapable to grasp it, the greater and grander it is, because goodness in that case surpasses your power of comprehending it.

When Allah, be ever gloried His Majesty and Might, addresses His creatures, He addresses them not with enjoined duties. Allah does not say do that and do not do that, but says, 'O mankind believe,' and whosoever believes among them, He enjoins on him duties. Therefore, you find every enjoined duty in the Noble Qur'an preceded with His Statement (that means), ***'O you who believe.'*** For as long as you have engaged yourself in a faith commitment with Allah, you have believed that to Allah belongs the attributes of absolute perfection, enfolding endless ideals. If you received a command of faith that you do not understand but you honored it and performed it, it would inspire relief in your heart and serenity in your soul and you would find your willingness to obey The Almighty overwhelms your whole being. Addressing judgments to the believers and their performing them is an acknowledgement of your belief in The All-Wise God, Who orders you with nothing but brings you absolute prosperity.

Faculties in the soul that we know and others we do not respond to the Law of Allah. The Most Exalted legislates based on the realties He alone sees. Nothing whatsoever escapes His Knowledge, and you never have a whole picture.

A vivid example of compliance is Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), after the return of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) from the miracle of *Al-Isrâ'* (the Night Journey) **[The miraculous night journey during which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was taken from Al-Masjid Al-Harâm (at Mecca) to the farthest masjid (in Jerusalem)]** and *Al-Mi'râj* (the Ascension to Heaven) **[The miraculous ascension of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, from Jerusalem to the Heavens to meet his Lord]**. On hearing about the journey of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to *Baitul-Maqdas* (Jerusalem) and his ascension to the seventh heaven people disagreed and listeners wavered between a believer and a belier, but what did Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) say? Did he discuss the matter? Did he subject it to his reasoning power?

And discussed it as the nonbelievers who said to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), ***'Claim you that you reached it in a night and we mount on camels back for a month to reach there.'***

They reckoned it materialistically, though they are unseen matters unsubjected to such sort of estimations.

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) did not pursue that manner of judgment, he simply said, ***'If he said so, he has told the truth.'*** He priorly ranked truth for being told by the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and did not base it on the credibility of the story. Abu Bakr said, ***'If I believe him in the news coming to him from heaven, will not I believe him that he moved from Mecca to Baitul-Maqdas (Jerusalem) and returned in a night?'***

Also Al-Fârûq **[The one who distinguishes truth from falsehood]** 'Umar bin Al-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him), on seeing people kissing the Black Stone, a matter that bewilders the minds, what did he say? He said, ***'By Allah, I know that you are a stone that neither harms nor avails and had I not seen the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) kissing you I would not have kissed you.'*** This is absolute submission. He does not measure the judicial matters by rational standards but receive them by the Command of The Legislator, Allah, all praise and glory be to Him.

Among the rituals that cause the mind to pause meditatively for long is *'Arafât*. That is the topic we shall discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter Three
To The 'Arafât Of Allah

After entering Mecca in a state of *Ihrâm*, the pilgrims perform *Tawâf* and *Sa'y*, and on the eighth day of *Dhu'l–Hijjah* **[The 12th month of the year in the Muslim calendar]** they head for Minâ **[An area close to Mecca on the road to 'Arafah where pilgrims spend the *Tashreeq* days. It is the place of throwing pebbles at Jamarat and ritual slaughter of the sacrifice]** where they spend the night. Then, on the ninth day of *Dhu'l–Hijjah* they proceed towards *'Arafah* **[The area that surrounds Mount *Rahmah*, southeast of Mecca; Standing at 'Arafah on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah and staying there from mid-day to sunset is the essence of the Hajj]** or directly proceed from Mecca towards *'Arafah*.

As well known amidst the rituals, *'Arafah* is not located inside the Sanctuary but outside it. Therefore, the mind paused meditatively before it for long. Whenever Allah reveals a secret to a faithful mind, He causes it to pause before another so that the Unseen remains non-submitting to the mechanism of legislation but to the absolute power of The Legislator.

Hajj involves many stages beginning first with the choice of having faith and pronouncing the Testimony of Faith (*As-Shahadah*) [*Lâ ilâh illâ Allah wanâ Muhammadan rasûl Allah* There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah]. By choosing belief man enters into the sphere of being assigned duties shared by all the believers in Allah and His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), which include performing the daily prayers (*Salah*), fasting during the month of Ramadan (*Saum*), paying the alms tax (*Zakâh*), and performing the major pilgrimage to Mecca by whoever can afford the expenses (for one's conveyance, provision and residence).

We have aforesaid that the Hajj rituals moves us outside the sphere of general free choice to that of special assignments, so none should pass beyond the *Mîqat* **[The place where pilgrims declare their intentions to perform Hajj or 'Umrah and assume the state of Ihrâm]** at the bordering limits of the Sanctuary without being in a state of *Ihrâm*, nor enters the *Ka'bah* without performing the rites enjoined on him from *Tawâf* and *Sa'y* and when the time of Standing at *'Arafât* is due he must set out from Mecca towards Mount *'Arafât*.

By embracing Islam man commits himself to duties and when he wants to perform Hajj he commits himself to another enjoined duties peculiar to Hajj. If he wants to complete the Hajj – and Hajj is *'Arafah* – he should move out of the Meccan Sanctuary to an area lying outside its borders.

If we want to specify the sacred precincts of Hajj we will find them four places: *Al-Masjid-al-Harâm* (the Sacred Meccan Masjid), *Al-Baitul-Harâm* (the Sacred House, i.e., the Ka'bah), *Al-Baladul-Harâm* (the Sacred City), *Al-Mash'ar Al-Haram* (the Sacred Monument) **[The hill in Muzdalifah where pilgrims should supplicate Allah after they have spent the night at Muzdalifah, and after which they should go to Mecca to throw Jamarat Al-'Aqabah (the closest stone pillar to Mecca) on the morning of the tenth of Dhu'l–Hijjah]** – *Al-Muzdalifah* – the place between *'Arafât* and *Minâ* where pilgrims stop on their return from *'Arafât* to collect the pebbles with which they will stone the devil. There they offer the *Maghrib* (Sunset) and *'Ishâ'* (Evening) prayers together in the time of the latter ('Ishâ' Prayer), before proceeding towards *Minâ* for spending the night and preparing themselves for throwing the pebbles. Then they go to Mecca to perform *Ifadah Tawâf* **[Pilgrims' circumambulation of the Ka'bah upon their return from Muzdalifah]**.

Theophany in 'Arafah

In *Arafât* many Bestowments of Allah on His servants are divinely manifested. They are endless, countless bestowments, for Divine Manifestation with forgiveness to all people happens in that place, why? To mind that when Allah manifests Himself with forgiveness in a place other than the Sanctuary, then such a Divine manifestation has its reasons. In *'Arafah* you have restricted your choice completely; you have no choice neither in time nor place. All those present in *'Arafah* on that day, standing in that vast domain are bound to be in that place at a set time. The sun must go down on them while in *'Arafât*.

Allah wants to invite our attention that the greater the restriction imposed on man the higher the reward. As aforesaid, all the acts of worship have been restricted timewise, as offering *Salah* (Prayers) and paying the *Zakâh* (obligatory charity), except the Standing at *'Arafât,* which has been restricted by both time and place.

Regarding the state to which the pilgrim should adhere while performing the Hajj rituals Allah, be He highly blessed and exalted, says (what means):

"The Hajj (pilgrimage) is (in) the well-known (lunar year) months (i.e. the 10th month, the 11th month and the first ten days of the 12th month of the Islâmic calendar, i.e. two months and ten days). So whosoever intends to perform Hajj therein by assuming Ihrâm), then he should not have sexual relations (with his wife), nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly during the Hajj." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 197)

Allah has bound the Hajj rites timewise; you cannot perform Hajj on any day of the year, and has also bound it by place in Mecca, *'Arafât* and *Minâ*; because if you miss going to any of the three your Hajj will not be complete. But Hajj includes other rituals in which compensation is accepted, which we shall discuss in the next chapters.

Allah, praise and glory be to Him, wants to train you on how you may restrain yourself and bind it by His Commands, to be worthy of the blessings He showers upon you on that honorable day. He bestows on you endless forgiveness and good pleasure, endless to the extent that it is stated in the tradition that Iblis (the devil) is seen in no other time or place more exasperated than in that Standing, why? Because the satisfaction and happiness of Iblis is in having man a sinner. Iblis disobeyed his Lord by refusing to prostrate himself before Âdam (peace be upon him); therefore he wants all mankind sinners. When Iblis senses that the inner self of man is talking him into committing a misdeed, he hastens to tempt him and endear it to him until he falls into sin, which fills Iblis with great joy because people have disobeyed as he did. But the Power and Might of Allah, praise and glory be to Him, willed to make the Day of *'Arafah* a day on which all the handiworks of Iblis are vainly wasted, and Allah showers His Mercy, Good Pleasure, Forgiveness and full Pardon on all the people of *'Arafah*, a reward offered for binding the movement of their lives on that day according to the Will of Allah, praise and glory be to Him.

The Day of forgiving sins

About this day, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "***Verily, Allah has manifested Himself to the people of the Standing (meaning 'Arafah) and He forgave the people of 'Arafah and He forgave the people of Al-Mash'ar Al-Haram (the Sacred Monument) and Allah bore on behalf of all the***

consequences of what they committed against the servants." Therefore, it is said that *Al-Hajj Al-Mabrûr* **[Hajj performed in accordance with the Prophet's tradition and is accepted by Allah]** erases whatever precedes it, causing the forgiveness of all the sins that were committed before the Hajj, so man returns as his mother gave birth to him (sinless).

But religious scholars differ in opinion regarding the following question: Whether Hajj causes the forgiveness of all the sins, those having to do with Allah and with people, or does it only cause the forgiveness of the sins transgressed against Allah, meaning those between you and your Lord? As for the remission of the sins between you and the servants, it stipulates to hand back their rights and to beg the forgiveness of those whom you have wronged.

There is another opinion that says, 'When Allah manifests Himself with His endless Mercy on the Day of *'Arafah* to the people of *'Arafât*, He forgives all the sins; whatever is between you and Allah, He forgives and whatever is between you and the servants, He bears on your behalf. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to invoke Allah saying, ***"O Allah! Forgive my sins; those sinned against you forgive them for me, and those sinned against others than You, bear them on my behalf."***

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) informs us that Allah forgave the people of *'Arafah* and He forgave the people of *Al-Mash'ar Al-Haram* (the Sacred Monument) and He, glory be to Him, bore the burdens committed in violation of the servants' right.

We have to clarify that *'Arafât* has two pronunciations: in the first we say *'Arafât*, as stated in the Noble Qur'an and in the second we say *'Arafah*, as stated in the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying, ***"Hajj is 'Arafah."***

'Arafât became a proper noun indicating a spacious place wherein pilgrims gather on the ninth of *Dhu'l–Hijjah*. *'Arafât* is not a mount; if you heard what people usually call (Mount *'Arafât*), learn that what is meant is the mount ascribed to *'Arafât* area but the mount itself is not *'Arafât*.

Many people think that the completion of Hajj is in ascending the mount called *Rahmah*, on which the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) stood in the Farewell Hajj and if the pilgrim did not ascend it, as though he did not perform Hajj!! We say that this is untrue, *'Arafah* is the spacious valley that the mount overlooks. The name of the mount is derived from its proximity to this valley; the mount is ascribed to *'Arafât* area not the opposite.

Many opinions were stated regarding the significance of the word *'Arafah*. There is a difference between an attributive name that becomes a name afterwards and a proper noun. If the name is a proper noun from the beginning, it does not necessitate standing for a meaning. A man's name could be 'Happy' when he is most miserable; this is a proper name unrelated to a certain denotation.

In fact, some people like to choose names inspiring good omen, as some used to name their sons *'Sa'd'* (i.e., Good Fortune) hoping that he becomes fortunate. The Arab used to choose names of good omen; they used to name *'Sakhr'* (i.e., Rock) so that the person may grow to be rocklike in the face of his enemies or name him *'Kalb'* (i.e., Hound) so that none would dare defy him.

It was said to the Arab that they well choose the names of their slaves by calling them, *'Sa'îd'* (i.e., Happy), *'Sa'd'* (i.e., Good Fortune) and *'Fadl'* (i.e., Grace) but choose improper names for their sons calling them *'Sakhr'* (i.e., Rock) and *'Kalb'* (i.e., Dog), and they answered, 'Yes, because we name our sons for our enemies and name our slaves for ourselves!'

Reason of naming

'*Arafah* now became a proper noun but the reason of being named thus has more than a story. It was narrated that when Âdam and Hawwâ' (Adam and Eve, may Allah be pleased with them) descended from Paradise in obedience to the Command of Allah, Âdam (may Allah be pleased with him) descended in a place and Hawwâ' (may Allah be pleased with her) in another.

Each of them descended in a separate place and both kept looking for the other until they met at that place, therefore it was named *'Arafah* (Forgathering).

Discussing Âdam and Hawwâ' and their forgathering in *'Arafah* demands an explanation. Just try to imagine the state of Âdam descending in a wide strange world all by himself, looking around him and finding no human. If he were to see a human, he would surely meet him with strong longing. For that purpose Allah set apart Âdam and Hawwâ' so that each of them would look for the other longingly and when they meet each would hold on to the other, never to let go. Another narration tells that the angels said to Âdam after he came down to earth at that place, 'Confess your sins and turn in repentance to your Lord.' So he said as the Noble Qur'an relates to us (what means):

"They said: 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.'" (Al-A'râf, 7: 23)

Bearing on that, the meaning would be (admitting) his sins and (knowing) how to repent. Now we shall move back to the Khalîl (the close servant) of Allah, Ibrâhîm (Abraham, peace be upon him), and how did Allah inform him about the place of *'Arafah*.

Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) saw in the vision he had that he was slaughtering his son Ismâ'îl (Ishmael, peace be upon him), a hard deed on the soul being his only son whom he should slaughter with his very hands. Ibrâhîm sat at that place thinking over and mediating, therefore the day of *'Arafah* was known as the Day of *Tarwaiyah* (Deliberation). On becoming certain that the vision is true and knowing that he must slaughter his son, the place wherein he learned the truth of the vision was named *'Arafah* (Seeing the truth).

Another says that Jibrîl (Angel Gabriel) used to teach Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) the Hajj rituals at that place and used to ask him, 'Do you now know?' And Ibrâhîm answered, 'Yes, I do.' And perhaps it means that man knows his Lord in that place and comes to it confessing his sins and begging for the Forgiveness of Allah in humility and submission.

However, the different meanings and circumstances that led to assigning the name of *'Arafah* or *At-Tarwaiyah* to that day are not in opposition. Indeed, on that blessed Day Allah boasts of His servants saying:

"See My servants, they have forsaken all what they possess and came to Me disheveled and dust covered begging for My Forgiveness and Mercy. I call you to bear witness that I have forgiven them."

In *'Arafât* we notice absolute equality and full presence of all the hajjis to the Sacred House of Allah without the absence of anyone. All present at one time that ends with the setting of the sun of *'Arafah* Day, which is the only place on earth wherein people gather that way at such perfect timing.

We go to Mecca on different journeys arriving at different times, each according to the time of his trip. One group may arrive before the Hajj by two weeks, whereas another by one day only and in back home journeys we return separately, each according to the time of his trip. Even when lodging in Mecca the means of people vary; some may lodge in a luxurious apartment, others in a room or part of a room, others lodge in a hotel, others lie down on the floor to the end of what people's capabilities may afford them.

But in *'Arafât* the situation completely differs; the place holds all races, all nationalities, all languages, all ranks and all fates. Equality is the distinctive feature amongst them all, all are disheveled and dust covered. No difference between the rich and the poor, the masters and the humble folk; all have an untidy disordered appearance, weary and fatigued. All are equal with regard to humility and submission; none is superior or higher in rank.

You will never find a bragger in *'Arafah*, boasting of his worldly status, but all are showing submission and humility to Allah, be He highly blessed and exalted. Each is rivaling to declare his submissiveness and fear of Him. As if goodness only prevails among people when they become even in submission and servility shown to Allah, and none of them daresay that he is better than another.

That day, on which we shake off pride and unjustness, Allah, praise and glory be to Him, manifests Himself to us with forgiveness, because obduracy is what set a barrier between us and Allah. That is to say, living in one community where each of us regards himself better than the other, sees his merits and fails to see his demerits! On that great day we learn that what distinguishes us is not self-given but from our Creator. Thereon, servility is forged within us and only then The Truth, praise and glory be to Him, says:

"They are a congregation who deserve My Forgiveness and Mercy."

Obduracy, vanity and attempts of claiming superiority and assuming airs of haughtiness are the withholders of the Mercy of Allah, and nothing is more indicative of it than what happened when the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) went out to tell his companions about the *Lailatul-Qadr* **[The night of Al-Qadr is either indicative of the honor and station of that night, thus meaning 'An honorable night', or the word 'Al-Qadr' may also refer to the ordainment and disposal of affairs. So it would mean 'the night in which all that will occur in the following year will be decreed,' following the Qur'anic Statement of Allah saying (what means), 'Therein (on that night) is decreed every matter of ordainment.' (Ad-Dukhân, 44: 4)** ***Lailatul-Qadr*** **is concealed in one of the odd nights in the last ten days of Ramadan; the Noble Qur'an was sent down in the Night of** ***Al-Qadr*** **and the Qur 'an itself describes as 'Better than a thousand months']**. On finding two quarrelling persons he forgot it, thereby the Companions were deprived of knowing its exact day. Following upon, disputation, dissension and quarrelling prohibit the bestowment of boons on the community. An assembly that wishes to receive the Bestowments of Allah must enjoy absolute serenity together, having all their faculties congruous and each is in the right state to be instructed by his Lord.

On the Day of *'Arafah* people supplicate much; each on that great Day, be it hot or rainy, stands earnestly supplicating. All are standing, all are submissive and all are humble before the Lord of the Worlds.

In that Standing, mercy is sent down and Allah manifests Himself with forgiveness to the people of *'Arafah*, and by the grace of Allah they become sinless because Hajj erases whatever precedes it, as aforesaid. Since you have been successfully guided to that endless goodness and since Allah has manifested Himself to you with forgiveness, after *'Arafât* you should never revert to what incurs the Wrath of Allah, The Most Exalted. You do not guarantee that The Almighty will keep you in this world and destine another Hajj for you in the coming years. Since you do not guarantee that, you must strive for your hereafter and hold fast to the righteous path for the sake of meeting Allah at any time with your sins forgiven.

Seize the opportunity of Hajj for it purges you of sins and never listen to the whispers of the devil, and enough of the Mercy of Allah that you conquered him. If he sneaked in your soul at a time of weakness and you fell into sin, Allah has forgiven you by virtue of a day in which you showed your sorrow, submissiveness and awe, that is the Day of *'Arafah*.

But keep in mind that the devil will never leave you alone, because the stronger you grow in faith the more effort the devil exerts to tempt you into sin. Either it is Satan who disturbs the peace of the human conscience in its beliefs, for being the summit of faith; a task needing Satan who devotes himself to the purpose of tempting people to disbelieve, Allah forbid.

Or the offspring of Satan, the devils of jinn along with the devils of humankind, who devote themselves to what is ranked below the supreme faith: temptation of people to commit other sins like adultery, bribery, stealing and others. That is the work of the offspring of Satan. As for Satan himself, as aforesaid, he barges, into your highest beliefs and tries to arise doubts within you, with respect to the existence of Allah, His Oneness and His Might and Power and he keeps insinuating evil to man.

<u>Pouring down from 'Arafât</u>

The Truth, praise and glory be to Him, says (what means):

"Then when you pour down from (mount) Arafat, remember Allâh (by glorifying His Praises, i.e. prayers and invocations, etc.) at the Sacred Monument." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 198)

But what is the significance of pouring down? When you fill a cup to the brim the surplus must overflow on the sides. Hence, the surplus is something beyond the capacity that got separated from an existing whole.

The Qur'anic verse saying (what means), *'**Then when you pour down from (mount) Arafat,**'* is a forejudgment that on departing *'Arafât* it will be filled in a way that surpasses its specified capacity as though overflowing. That is the Judgment of Allah in Hajj. If you witnessed that scene and saw the pilgrims overflowing from *'Arafât*, as though you are seeing a cup that was filled and started to overflow, knowing not wherefrom these multitudes have emerged and whereto they are heading.

Whoever beholds the Muslims in *'Arafât*, would find them an endless mass of humans. When they overflow on the eve of that day and they descend *'Arafât*, you somehow feel while looking at them as though they were a flood pouring down. Human masses impossible to be differentiated, wearing the same clothes, thus you get the impression that they have the same traits, as if they were one running flood. That is the picture of pouring down from *'Arafât*.

When you contemplate the people heading for *Al-Muzdalifah* you wonder where have been all these multitudes. You see the valleys streaming with people exactly as a vehement flood, moving as a single mass. After pouring down from *'Arafât* comes the second overflow, proceeding from *Al-Muzdalifah* to *Minâ*, which is stated in the Qur'anic verse saying (what means):

"Then hasten onward from the place whence all the people hasten onward and ask Allâh for His Forgiveness. Truly, Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 199)

A pilgrim must celebrate the Praises of Allah time and again for the grace He conferred upon him by easing that blessed journey. He brought you – faithful believers – to His Sacred House then would make you return, which is a matter that deserves expressing thankfulness and gratitude and keeping on remembering Him. The Qur'anic verse says (what means), ***'And remember Him (by invoking Allâh for all good, etc.) as He has guided you,' (Al-Baqarah, 2: 198)***. Through His Guidance you were shown the shortest path to goodness and the path to forgiveness was smoothed to you by money, health and ability. Surely, such Guidance from Allah deserves engaging oneself in His Remembrance and expressing gratitude.

Afterwards, The Almighty says (what means), ***'And verily, you were, before, of those who were astray.' (Al-Baqarah, 2: 198)***, meaning before Islam, because during the Pre-Islamic era they used to circumambulate the House naked doing nothing but clapping and whistling, but Allah, be He highly blessed and exalted, guided them to the right Hajj that forgives the sins.

Abrogating the privileges of the Quraish

The Truth, gloried ever be His Majesty and Might, says (what means), ***"Then hasten onward from the place whence all the people hasten onward." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 199),*** where 'then' denotes consecutiveness, but does it here means to hasten after standing at *'Arafat*? Or is it after spending the night at *Muzdalifah*? ***'Then hasten onward,'*** is a retort to all who say that spending the night at *Muzdalifah* is a must.

This noble verse was revealed with regard to the leaders of the Quraish who considered themselves the people of the Meccan Sanctuary, trying to have privileges distinguishing them from the rest of the people. Therefore, they used to depart first from *'Arafat* then people follow them. In the Farewell Hajj [the first and the last Hajj performed by the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace], the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ***"You all belong to Âdam and Âdam is of dust. Verily the most honored among you, in the Sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous of you."*** Allah thus barred the behavior the Quraish comported itself with in trying to be distinguished from people, by abolishing whatever advantages the Quraish had over other Arabs.

Some interpreters say that the noble Qur'anic verse saying (what means), ***"From the place whence all the people hasten onward," (Al-Baqarah, 2: 199)*** signifies the place wherefrom Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) has hastened onward, because Allah taught Ibrâhîm all the Hajj rituals, which he in turn taught to people.

There is no ambiguity in the Qur'anic verse saying (what means), ***"From the place whence all the people hasten onward,"*** because Allah has portrayed Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him) in words as a nation.
The word *'people'* here is used to describe someone who combines many attributes. Allah, be He highly blessed and exalted, has portrayed our Messenger, Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in words with the Qur'anic verse saying (what means):

"Or do they envy mankind for what Allah hath given them of his Bounty?" (An-Nisâ', 4: 54)

Further, the man who went to the believers to warn them against the nonbelievers who were preparing themselves to fight them, was expressed as follows in the Qur'anic verse saying (what means):

"Those unto whom the people said, 'Verily, the people (pagans) have gathered against you (a great army), therefore, fear them.'" (Âl-'Imrân, 3: 173)

Subsequently, *'The people'* is used in the Qur'anic verse to describe a person (the Prophet Ibrâhîm, peace be upon him) in whom good morals were gathered.

Afterwards, The Truth, gloried ever be His Majesty and Might, says (what means), ***"Ask Allâh for His Forgiveness," (Al-Baqarah, 2: 198)*** a proof that no matter how hard man tries to guard the due Rights of Allah, still he may mistake. Therefore, begging forgiveness is required. ***"Truly, Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful," (Al-Baqarah, 2: 199)*** means that you will find Allah Most Forgiving, Most Merciful and will answer your supplication and forgive you. He will bring you back from Hajj purely white of all sins.

On that night the pilgrims gather the pebbles with which they will stone Iblis (the devil) from *Al-Muzdalifah* and offer the Maghrib (Sunset) and 'Ishâ' (Evening) Prayers together in the time of the latter ('Ishâ' Prayer). Afterwards, they head towards *Minâ* to stone the devil, which has a story to tell apart in the next chapter.

Chapter Four
Stoning the Devil

By arriving to *Minâ* **[An area close to Mecca on the road to 'Arafah where pilgrims spend the Tashreeq days. It is the place of throwing pebbles at Jamarat and ritual slaughter of the sacrificial animal]** the hajjis have fulfilled half the Hajj duty. The Hajj has two cornerstones without them it would never be complete and no expiations or whatever compensations are sanctioned to atone for them.

The first cornerstone is standing at *'Arafât* and the second is the *Ifadah Tawâf* **[Pilgrims' circumambulation of the Ka'bah upon their return from Muzdalifah]**. These are the two cornerstones of Hajj, in other than them it is permissible to make expiations and offer a sacrifice.

When proceeding onward from *Al-Mash'ar Al-Haram* (the Sacred Monument) to Minâ for stoning the devil we must keep in mind an important issue: the story of Ibrâhîm (Abraham, peace be upon him) and his son Ismâ'îl (Ishmael, peace be upon him). The story of manifest trial to which Allah subjected Ibrâhîm, who saw in a dream that Allah is commanding him to slaughter his son, Ismâ'îl. A severe affliction fated by Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, but why? Because Ibrâhîm was an old man, while his son Ismâ'îl was in the prime of youth. At an age when the father usually feels that his son is the continuation of his life and becomes proud of him, a son that lends a hand in the hardships of life. But over and above, his wife, Sarah (may Allah be pleased with her), was barren.

Which means the absence of causes to give Ibrâhîm another son, but surely the Originator of causes (The Causer Almighty Allah) is mightily able to give.

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, commanded Ibrâhîm to slaughter his son Ismâ'îl. If He commanded him to kill his son it would have been easier, because he could have assigned some people to kill Ismâ'îl away from him. It was also possible to take his son Ismâ'îl to a mountaintop then push him to see nothing.

But the command was to slaughter Ismâ'îl, in plain words to seize the knife, take his son while looking at him, slaughter him with his own hands and the son sheds to death. A very painful experience even if he had many children. But how much harder would it be when having a lone son in the prime of youth on the one hand and being an old man with a barren wife on the other hand!! A deed not to be fulfilled except by someone whose love for Allah surpasses all that exists, a love higher than any kind of love. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

"None of you will have faith till I am dearer to him than his father, his children and all people."

That is the trial of faith undergone by Ibrâhîm in this specific point, which proved that Allah is dearer to him than anything else. Not by words but by deeds.

Ibrâhîm took his son to slaughter him in fulfillment of the Command given by Allah. Ibrâhîm did not want to surprise Ismâ'îl by taking him to the mount and shocking him by the knife and the slaughtering, but he wanted to tell him first.

The Noble Qur'an relates that story in the Perfect Divine Revelation saying (what means):

“And, when he (his son) was old enough to walk with him, he said: ‘O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you (offer you in sacrifice to Allâh), so look what you think!’” (As-Sâffât, 37: 102)

Ibrâhîm wanted to inform his son Ismâ‘îl about what would happen. But how did Ismâ‘îl, the Prophet, receive the Trial decreed by Allah? He replied as the Noble Qur’an narrates to us (what means):

“He said: ‘O my father! Do that which you are commanded, Inshâ' Allâh (if Allâh will), you shall find me of As-Sâbirin (the patient ones, etc.).’” (As-Sâffât, 37: 102)

Ismâ‘îl loved Allah more than his life and soul. So, the old man and the youth hastened with the knife, but will the devil leave the obedience of Allah be fulfilled without spoiling it? Of course not, his mission is to ruin the obedience shown to Allah on earth.

Satan came to Khalîl Allah (the close servant to Allah), Ibrâhîm, to ruin the summit of faith. He came to Ibrâhîm asking him: ***What do you intend to do to your son? What is the meaning of slaughtering him when you are an old man in need of him? How could you believe such a dream? It is a lie.***

It is narrated that the devil was personified to one of the worshippers as a lad who served him for long. Once the old man went to perform the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer on a rainy day and muddy ground. The incarnate devil held the lamp for the old man while rising and falling in the mud. The people wondered how that old man tortured thus the lad who accompanied him on such a rainy muddy night. Whereas the pious man simply told them to leave him suffer for the One Who decreed sufferance upon him is Allah. As though Allah has cast in the soul of that old man that this boy is a devil.

The devil never gives up a trifle he may steal through. Even more, he tries by any means to force man to sin. Therefore, the devil left no possible way with Ibrâhîm, Ismâ'îl and Hâjar without pursuing it, perchance he might ruin one of the highest and most rewarding obedience shown to Allah, that of Summit Faith.

The moment Ibrâhîm and his son Ismâ'îl (peace be upon them) left the house, the devil embarked on his mission murmuring to himself: ***It is a trial, a severe affliction and if I failed to seduce those people in such an adversity never will I be able to.***

He came to Hâjar and said to her, ***'Know you whereto Ibrâhîm has went with your son?'*** She replied, ***'To perform some errands.'*** The devil said to her, ***'He took him not for some errands but took him to slaughter him.'*** Hâjar asked, ***'Why slaughters him?'*** The devil replied, ***'He claimed that his Lord commanded him to do so.'*** Upon that she said, ***'Away from my face. As along as Allah has commanded, He must be obeyed.'***

The devil withdrew away from her disgraced and hurried to overtake Ibrâhîm and his son. He started with Ibrâhîm struggling to deter him from fulfilling the Command of Allah. He said to him, ***'Who told you that this dream is from Allah? Perhaps it was jumbled false dreams (chimeras), for what Allah would gain from slaughtering your son? Disobey the order; otherwise you would live to regret it. If you slaughtered him, the face of your son while dying would be enshrined in your memory. His face would forever remain before your eyes torturing you for the rest of your life. You are an eighty-four years old man and would never be blessed with a son after him.'*** And he kept tempting Ibrâhîm, but Ibrâhîm never listened to him.

When the devil despaired of Ibrâhîm he went to Ismâ'îl and said to him, ***'Your father would slaughter you.'*** But Ismâ'îl replied***, 'If Allah commanded him to do so, let him do what Allah willed.'*** Then, he tried to prevent Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl from going to the place of slaughtering, known afterwards as Al-Kabsh Mount (The Ram Mount), for being the mount on which the sacrifice was sent down.

The devil strived to impede the progress of Ibrâhîm at the *Jamrat Al-'Aqabah* **[The closest stone pillar to Mecca, known as Large Jamrat]** in *Minâ* in order to fulfill the Command of Allah; thereupon Ibrâhîm seized seven pebbles and stoned the devil. But the devil and his offspring despaired not and chased Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl, perchance they could hinder them from honoring the Command of Allah. So, Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl stoned them to drive them away.

This is the story of stoning, stoning the devil and we are commanded to stone the devil just as Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl (peace be upon them) did.

The moral of stoning the devil

After standing at 'Arafat and having our sins forgiven, Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, wants to instructs us by the story of Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl with the devil to guard our penitence. We have to stone the devil within ourselves in a nonphysical sense, barring all his gateways to us. Whenever the devil attempts to approach us with his evil whispers we should not listen to him, but to stone him by our defiance to yield to his satanic temptations until he recedes and leaves us dispossessed of all power over us.

Just listening to the devil is the first step taken in disobedience. He wants to entice you into listening to him. Do not give him that chance. Do not listen to his temptations, but stone him at once by defiance.

Some people may wonder saying, ‘We are pelting a stone, so what is its connection with the devil? And does the devil exist in it?’

Some religious scholars say that the devils are imprisoned in these stones during the days of *Minâ*. To them we say, ‘Whether this is true or false, it constitutes, as aforesaid, a trial of the strength of faith within the hearts.’ For the purpose behind the principles of faith lies not in understanding them or grasping the wisdom behind. But the purpose lies in their being enjoined by Allah, all praise and glory be to Him; we kiss a stone (the Black Stone) and pelt another. The reason is that Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, has commanded us and we must obey the Ordinance without trying to philosophize matters based on our limited weak minds. Since Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, has commanded, there must be a wisdom that we may or may not know, because there are many secrets in the universe we know nothing about.

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, wants us to keep in mind that since we have completed the Hajj, which is paid for from lawful money and performed for the Sake of Allah and therefore is surely accepted and is *Mabrûr* **[Hajj performed in accordance with the Prophet’s tradition and is accepted by Allah],** the devil would never leave us in peace once our sins are forgiven. He would push us hard to err and sin anew. The moment we return from Hajj he would contrive to ruin our allegiance to Allah and cast disobedience within ourselves.

The Almighty wants us to learn that in the Hajj we have conquered the devil by forbearing from all what He has forbidden. Not only a forbearance that involves the constant prohibitions but it extended further to include some of the lawful acts. Thus, the forbiddance intensified, but despite that we won through and completed the Hajj rituals while engaged in the Remembrance of Allah and solely occupied with worship and supplication. Meaning, not only are we able to obey the doctrine but also are able to do higher and greater acts of obedience.

If we remember well this wisdom we will firmly adhere to the Fear of Allah after performing the Hajj rituals and inwardly we will realize that we are capable to show far more obedience and abide by it. Therefore, The Truth, all praise and glory be to Him, says (what means):

"So when you have accomplished your Manasik [(i.e. Ihrâm, Tawâf of the Ka'bah and As-Safâ and Al-Marwah), stay at 'Arafât, Muzdalifah and Mina, Ramy of J amarât, (stoning of the specified pillars in Mina) slaughtering of Hady (animal, etc.)]. Remember Allâh as you remember your forefathers or with a far more remembrance. But of mankind there are some who say: 'Our Lord! Give us (Your Bounties) in this world!" and for such there will be no portion in the Hereafter." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 200)

In order not to go astray or err, Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, wants us to always remember Him as we remember our fathers when away from us. To remember Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, because that is the gathering where all desires and affiliations no longer exist.

The Truth, Blessed and Exalted be He, wants to approach to the minds of His creatures the concept that makes their movement work together and not against one another. Our Remembrance of Allah should be far more than that of our parents.

Because no matter how long they live in the end they will die. But Allah is Eternal, never to die. If parents are the immediate cause of our coming into existence, Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, is the One Who originated and created us from nothing. The creatures are ascribed to The Creator; we are mere causes. Thus, we must remember the Origin in coming to be, The One Who originated things out of nothing far more than just remembering the causes.

After the triumph of Ibrâhîm, Ismâ'îl and Hâjar (peace be upon them) and their firm stand in the adversity, the sacrifice was offered as the Noble Qur'an relates (what means):

'"And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice (i.e. a ram); And We left for him (a goodly remembrance) among generations (to come) in later times. Salâmun (peace) be upon Ibrâhim (Abraham)!' Thus indeed do We reward the Muhsinûn (good-doers - see V.2:112). Verily, he was one of Our believing slaves. And We gave him the glad tidings of Ishâque (Isaac, peace be upon him) a Prophet from the righteous." (As-Sâffât, 37: 107-112)

When Allah ordered Ibrâhîm to slaughter his son he had no other children beside Ismâ'îl, and then he was given the glad tidings of Ishâque (Isaac, peace be upon him). Despite the severity of the trial Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl resigned themselves to Allah and they complied with His Order. Therefore, Ibrâhîm was described in the Noble Qur'an as forbearing and ever oft-returning in repentance to Allah.

The act emphasizes that if we receive every Decree of Allah with contentment we will win the reward of obeying the Command of Allah. At the same time, Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, arrests fate, and that is exactly what happened with Ibrâhîm and Ismâ'îl (peace be upon them). Allah, be ever gloried His Majesty and Might, says (what means):

"Then, when they had both submitted themselves (to the Will of Allâh), and he had laid him prostrate on his forehead (or on the side of his forehead for slaughtering)." (As-Sâffât, 37: 107-112)

Meaning, Ibrâhîm actually began the execution and seized the knife to slaughter his son. But the knife slaughtered not, because a knife does not cut voluntarily but by the Command of Allah. Just as Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, commanded the fire into which Ibrâhîm was cast by saying (what means):

"We (Allâh) said: 'O fire! Be you coolness and safety for Ibrâhim (Abraham)!'" (Al-Anbiyâ', 21: 69)

And the fire complied and did not burn him. Similarly, Allah ordered the knife not to slaughter and it complied. At the moment of fulfilling the Command, Almighty Allah called Ibrâhîm as narrates the Noble Qur'an (what means):

"And We called out to him: 'O Abraham! You have fulfilled the dream (vision)!'" (As-Sâffât, 37: 104-105)

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, wants His creatures to believe in the wisdom of His Commands and proceed to their fulfillment with contentment. If you proceed to execute the Command with contentment, Allah raises His Decree. Therefore, memorize well this noble Qur'anic verse and remember it while in Minâ to realize that in all life incidents man lives through, Allah only raises His Decree when the afflicted person is contented with it. If you see a doom that lasted on an afflicted person, as a cureless disease in spite of all the applied remedies, or a hardship experienced either in children or property, and he was not freed from it despite the passage of a long time learn that the sufferer is not contented with the Fate of Allah and is complaining. The moment he feels contented and accepts the wisdom of Fate, he will be relieved from it.

Ibrâhîm fulfilled the vision and since he fulfilled it out of absolute contentment, willingness and submissiveness to the Wisdom of Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, in what He commanded, the doom was arrested and it was said to him, ‘Do not kill your son.’ Then a ram offered as a sacrifice descended from heaven. As if Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, Himself ransomed Ismâ‘îl with that ram. Not only that, but instead of taking Ibrâhîm’s sole son, Ismâ‘îl, Almighty Allah gave him the glad tidings of a second son, Is<u>h</u>âque.

As a rule, anyone who proceeds to fulfill the Divine Commands, still within the veils of the Unseen, though blind to their wisdom but out of trusting the Divine Omniscience, will surely receive a great reward. The further steps the Decree beyond the power of imagination, the stronger the faith enclosed in the hearts. There are people who refuse to abide by the prohibitions set by The Creator for missing the wisdom behind, when the wisdom is unveiled and the harm that befalls man because of them becomes evident, they start to forbear. But their forbearance does not arise from belief in the Command of Allah, but out of belief in medicine, science or others.

We have to know that there is a difference between the duty man assigns to another and the duty The Creator enjoins upon His creatures. In the former, we have to know the wisdom behind it to fulfill it, but in the latter we fulfill it out of belief in the absolute Wisdom of Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, in whatever He legislated. Everything judged by Allah and our minds stand powerless to understand, we fulfill out of belief in the Omniscience of The Legislator.

When Imam 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) discussed wiping over footwear (when performing ablution), he said, ***'If the matter submits to reasoning power, wiping the underside of the foot would be more deserving than its outside. Because the underside of the foot is the part subjected to dirt. But the way lies in adapting the soul to approach A Lord Who wants you to approach Him with obedience, and never dare allow yourself to come near Allah with whatever sort of argument. For Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, cannot be questioned as to what He does or commands.'***

When you come to stone the devil, you actually want to block the gateways through which he may steal into your soul, whether to attack the acme of your faith thus you stone the supreme devil, or the branches of your faith thus you stone the subservient devils. You stone the devil seven times. All is a physical matter that agrees with your corporality. But there is wisdom behind the Command that should not pass unnoticed; Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, wants us after performing the Hajj rituals to fully accept His Ordained Destiny with contentment no matter how it seemed to us. To be certain that whatever Allah has judged is surely the best.

Obedience and reasoning

During the Hajj the dialogue exchanged between the mind and obedience is continuous. Acts of obedience that bend the heads in mediation while performing the Hajj rituals as *Tawâf* **[The devotional act of circumambulating (i.e. walking around) the Ka'bah seven times while reciting prayers and supplication. Tawâf should begin and end at the Black Stone],** *Sa'y* **[The devotional act of walking seven times between the knolls of As-Safâ and Al-Marwah which are located some distance from the Ka'bah inside Al-Masjidul-Haram],** kissing the Black Stone and stoning another, beside other rites.

We say that such matters are beyond the bounds of reason, for having to do with discipline in obeying Allah and accustoming the human soul to yield to the highest Command. For Allah, glory be to Him, did not just enjoin duties immoderately but based on Perfect Wisdom.

While stoning the devil you have to remember that he never leaves a question of faith without striving to ruin it. The devil pursued our master Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him), and every time Ibrâhîm drove him away he returned to him once again. By casting the stones we first obey the Command of Allah and revive the tradition of our father Ibrâhîm, out of faithfulness to the one who fulfilled all and named us Muslims before the revelation of the Noble Qur'an, about whom Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, said in His Noble Qur'an (what means):

"And of Ibrâhim (Abraham) who fulfilled (or conveyed) all that (what Allâh ordered him to do or convey)." (An-Najm, 53: 37)

When we stone Iblis (the devil) in the Hajj we should be resolute not to obey him after returning home and we must feel that we have conquered him. That victory must subsist after the Hajj, because despite his conspiracies and evil insinuations to make us disbelieve we believed in Allah. Despite his struggles to make us join others in worship with Allah, we joined none. Then, we came to the Hajj and performed the rituals and thus transcended in obedience.

Stoning here symbolizes our victory over the devil on a day of damnation and manifest loss to the devils. The devil is accursed by Almighty Allah, the angels and the believers. The Curse of Allah on him is unseen to us but it exits and is continuous. Also, the angels' curse on him is unseen to us but it exits and is continuous.

As for us we curse him in a physical sense; that is casting stones at him in *Minâ*. On that day the devil is seen in his most abject and contemptible state.

It is the day of revenge and retaliation against the devil that tempted you. It is the day of victory over your bitterest enemy, who must remain your archenemy. At the same time you have been taught a lesson to avail you in the rest of your life. Never lose sight of the devil nor give him the chance to conquer you ever again. Accept the Commands of Allah and His Prohibitions with love and be contented with His Ordained Destiny. If you seal all the devil's passes, he will have no power over you. Not any trial Allah inflicts on you means an incurred anger because you do not see what Allah hides in His Decreed Fate. Perhaps, The Almighty has tried you because He wants you to earn a greater reward for your obedience and a higher compensation for not falling into sin, or to exalt you in Paradisal degrees. Surely, Allah, The All-Knower, knows the sincerity of your sought path and your heartily contentment with whatever destinies bring, so as to grant you the best of rewards for your sincerity and contentment.

After casting the pebbles of the *Jamrat Al-'Aqabah* or *Al-Jamrah Al-Kubrâ* **[The closest stone pillar to Mecca, known as the Large Jamrah or Jamrah of the supreme devil],** you perform the Minor Ending of *Ihrâm* **[This comes after concluding two of the three following rituals: Throwing the pebbles, Ifâdah Circumambulation or having one's hair cut or shortened]** then you must head for Mecca to perform the *Ifâdah Tawâf* **[Pilgrims' circumambulation of the Ka'bah upon their return from Muzdalifah]**, which is the last cornerstone of Hajj. Afterwards, comes the Major Ending of *Ihrâm* **[This comes after concluding three rituals: Throwing the pebbles, Ifâdah Circumambulation and having one's hair cut or shortened. Then a pilgrim may act freely even to have conjugal relations],** which sanctions to you the performance of all the acts that were forbidden during the Hajj.

If you have performed the *Sa'y* between the knolls of *As-Safâ* and *Al-Marwah* during the *Tawâf* of Hajj you do not have to perform it in the *Ifâdah Tawâf*. But if you have not performed it yet, perform *Sa'y* after the *Ifâdah Tawâf*.

There is voluntary *Tawâf* and *Sa'y* to whoever craved a higher reward and compensation. Truly, nothing is dearer to Almighty Allah than performing additional acts like those He enjoined upon us: as offering Voluntary Prayers, fasting, giving charity or sacrificing animals. Because such deeds betoken that we not only perform what Allah has enjoined upon us but also perform beyond them voluntary acts, as a warm expression and a deep love of our servility to Allah, Whose Majesty reigns supreme.

Chapter Five
The Ijtihâd Of The Religious Scholars

Many people talk to me about the difference of Imams in their *Ijtihâdât* **[Plural of the Arabic word *Ijtihâd*, which is an attempt to give a reasoned or deduced solution for unprecedented legal problems based on the four principles of Islam: the Noble Qur'an, the Prophetic Sunnah, the consensus of the scholars and analogy]** concerning some of the Hajj rituals in which no textual Qur'anic rules were stated. Faith dictates complete concurrence on explicit textual rules (in the Noble Qur'an), but as for the inexplicitly stated rules that Allah has left open before *Ijtihâd*, we have to respect the opinion of the *Mujtahid* **[A jurist qualified to exercise Ijtihâd]** regarding it. No Imam should consider what he arrived at through *Ijtihâd* as the right opinion and that of others as wrong. But we should say as the *Mujtahidun* from amongst the Imams, who said, ***"What I arrived at is a right opinion possible to be wrong, and what others have arrived at is a wrong possible to be right."***

That was proved at the hands of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), the legislator whom Allah had authorized to legislate what clarifies to people all the religious laws. In laws, the Noble Qur'an – the Inimitable Book – brought the basics and Almighty Allah entrusted His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to bring the details. Therefore, The Truth, praise be to Him, says (what means):

"And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad SAW) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it)." (Al-Hashr, 59: 7)

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) taught us to respect in *Ijtihâd* the different opinions, not to find fault with them, but to accept them.

An illustration is the incident that followed the Battle of *Al-Ahzâb* (The Confederates). After the disbelievers retreated and ran away, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ***"None of you should offer the 'Asr (Afternoon) Prayer except in Banu Quraizhah."***

Some Muslims who heard the call hurried to Banu *Quraizhah*, bent on performing the *'Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer there as ordered by the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), while others saw the sun inclining towards setting and feared to miss the *'Asr* Prayer and thus performed it and then continued their journey to Banu *Quraizhah*.

The two parties appealed to the judgment of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and he approved both. Those who performed the *'Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer before sunset in order not to miss the due time of its performance, that is concerning the party who considered the time. He also approved of those who did not perform the *'Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer except in Banu *Quraizhah*. That is concerning the party who considered the place. Judging that both parties were right.

We state this to prove that the difference between the Four Juristic Schools in the Hajj or other matters should be approvable, by analogy to what the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) accepted regarding offering the *'Asr* (Afternoon) in Banu *Quraizhah*.

Prior to visiting Egypt, Imam Al-Shâfi'ay (may Allah be pleased with him) had already established his own Juristic School. But when he came to Egypt he found the records of 'Abdullâh bin 'Amr bin Al-'Âs (may Allah be pleased with him) which included hadiths untold by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him).

That is owed to the fact that 'Abdullâh bin 'Amr bin Al-'Âs was known by writing, whereas Abu Hurairah did know writing but was a narrator. On reaching Egypt and obtaining what 'Abduallâh bin 'Amr bin Al-'Âs had left, which comprised hadiths he had never known before, Al-Shâfi'ay started to change some judgments he already inferred in his book entitled *Al-Jadîd* (The New) and changed others he had previously confirmed.

Similarly in the Hajj, with respect to all the religious issues over which the Imams differed: as spending the night in *Minâ*, or standing at *Al-Muzdalsifah*, or slaughtering and its place of execution, besides other matters, when asked about them the judgment that the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) gave was:

"Do and there is no harm."

Those who fast adhere to certain matters in the Hajj, observe what the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did in the *Farewell Hajj* **[The first and the last Hajj performed by the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace]**, which confirms with the normal, because the pursuance of the actions of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is to act upon the Authentic Sunnah. But we have to differentiate between adherence to the Sunnah of Proof and that of Judgment. You offer the *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayer as three *rak'ahs* **[The prayer of Muslims consists of Rak'ât or Rak'ahs (singular-rak'ah). Rak'ah represents a unit of the Prayer and consists of one standing, one bowing and two prostrations with a sitting in between]**, though no text in the Book of Allah stated that the *Maghrib* Prayer is three *rak'ahs*. Also, no Qur'anic text stated that the *Subh* (Morning) Prayer is two *rak'ahs* or that the *Zhuhr* (Noon) Prayer, the *'Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer and the *'Ishâ'* (Evening) Prayer are four *rak'ahs*.

But the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), who is the second legislator by the judgment of the Noble Qur'an, taught us thus.

We come to the word Sunnah that arouses different opinions among the religious scholars. Some Jurists say there are enjoined acts, obligations and Sunnah; the Sunnah means practices if done you will be rewarded, if not you will not be punished, that is called adherence to the Sunnah of Judgment. As the two *rak'ahs* you offer before the *Subh* Prayer; if you performed them you will be rewarded, if not you will not be punished. But as for the three *rak'ahs* of the *Maghrib* Prayer you perform them acting upon the Sunnah of Proof not that of Judgment.

Acting upon the more reliable course

In the Hajj duty some people performed certain acts before others, postponed or done earlier. Upon asking the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) he said:

"Do and there is no harm."

Such matters neither belong to the Sunnah of Proof nor that of Judgment. Hajj must make way for aspects of difference. But the performer of the Obligatory Hajj, in other words the First Hajj, should not depend on the easiest but the more reliable way. As for the Voluntary Hajj, performed after the Obligatory one, ease in it is broader and adopting the more reliable in acts of worship is an obligation, for pilgrimage to be more promising of being accepted by Allah. If you are offering prayers and do not know whether you offered two or three *rak'ahs* we tell you to consider that you offered two *rak'ahs* in order to adopt that which is more reliable.

For instance, in circumambulating the *Ka'bah* and *Al-Hatîm*, which is the arc where *Tawâf* **[The devotional act of circumambulating (i.e. walking around) the Ka'bah seven times while reciting prayers and supplications. Tawâf should begin and end at the Black Stone]** is performed outside it, you should not say that you would perform *Tawâf* just around the construction of the *Ka'bah*, because originally its construction ended at this arc. At the time the Arab came to reconstruct the *Ka'bah*, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was twenty-five years old; they pledged themselves to build it from honest money only. They gathered the honest money but found it insufficient except for the current space of the *Ka'bah* construction. So, they decided to build that which the honest money could afford, whereas the rest would have a border built for it only. These borders that resemble an arc are part of the *Ka'bah*.

When you perform *Tawâf,* you not only circumambulate the erection of the *Ka'bah* but also the additional parts outside the arc. If you perform *Tawâf* at the close circle, your *Tawâf* is valid. And if you perform *Tawâf* at the wide circle, your *Tawâf* is also valid. But when you perform *Tawâf* at the close circle, you will leave a part from the *Ka'bah*. Because, it is definite that the part encircled by the arc, having no construction, is from the *Ka'bah*. Obligatory Prayers are not permissible to be offered in it, because Obligatory Prayers are not permissible inside the *Ka'bah* but only outside it while facing it. Therefore, it is wiser to circumambulate the whole *Ka'bah* and face the whole of it in your prayers. In every enjoined duty you must behave prudently by offering extra, not less.

Slaughtering the sacrificial animal

Slaughtering has no explicit textual rule; therefore, you adopt the easily done judgment.

Those who judged that slaughtering is only permissible in *Minâ*, considered what Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did, whereas the others who judged that slaughtering is permissible in Mecca considered the noble Qur'anic verse in which Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, says (what means):

"An offering, brought to the Ka'bah." (Al-Mâ'idah, 5: 95)

Another opinion holds that all Mecca is a *Manhar* **[The place where to slaughter the sacrificial animals]**; meaning that slaughtering is permissible in whatever place inside it. All this does not denote disagreement, because disagreement can be in the pursued path, not the pursued end. All of us seek truth, you see it here and I see it there. Nothing can lead us both to a judgment based on a definitely established truth except through *Ijtihâd*. This is not a deficiency in the legislation, but a manner of easing the burden on people in judgments, why? Because, just as Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, created me having no choice in predestined matters and having a free will in other matters, where I can choose between alternatives, He made the judgments pertaining to the creed compulsory where I have no choice, and other judgments He left open to *Ijtihâd* and reasoning. Otherwise, how would we interpret the noble Qur'anic verse in which the Almighty says (what means):

"Only they had referred it to the Messenger or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have understood it from them (directly)." (An-Nisâ', 4: 83)

Deduction is to derive judgments through a process of reasoning; since you are trying to deduce an issue then it is not explicit. To prepare us for offering prayers Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, says in His Noble Book (what means):

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلاةِ فاغْسِلُواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُواْ بِرُؤُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَينِ} (النساء: 6)

"O you who believe! When you intend to offer *As-Salât* (the prayer), wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to ankles." (Al-Mâ'idah, 5: 6)

Before commencing prayers we have to do four things: to wash the face and the hands up to the elbows, and to rub the head and (wash) the feet. The question is whether the feet are included in the act of rubbing or that of washing.

The answer is that the noble Qur'anic verse says (what means), ***'Rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to ankles,'*** the feet (in the Arabic syntax) are in the accusative case, consequently it is coupled with the washed parts, which is the face and hands, not the rubbed part, which is the head. Conformity with the ordering here is a condition; you perform these acts according to the sequence of their doing. Therefore, Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, separated between two washed parts by a rubbed one.

The Major and Minor Ending of Ihrâm

We have to know that there is a Major Ending of *Ihrâm* and a Minor Ending of *Ihrâm*. After the Minor Ending all prohibitions during *Ihrâm* **[The sacred state of practicing great self-denial into which a Muslim must enter before performing Hajj or 'Umrah, during which certain actions are forbidden (like having conjugal relations, shaving, cutting one's nails, and several other actions) nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly. In this sacred state the dress of Muslim pilgrims**

consists of two lengths of white cotton, one wrapped around the loins, the other thrown over the left shoulder. *Ih̲râm* clothes for women should fully cover the body except the face, hands and feet] becomes lawful except conjugal relations, which is only permitted after *Ifadah Tawâf* **[Pilgrims' circumambulation of the Ka'bah upon their return from Muzdalifah]**. *Ifadah Tawâf* is a cornerstone we must care to perfectly perform: no more than seven *ashwaat* **[One complete circuit around the Ka'bah constitutes a shawt (pl. ashwaat or shawts), and seven ashwaat complete one Tawaf]**, because it is one of the cornerstones of Hajj.

In *Ifadah Tawâf* the picture differs because some have already taken off their *Ihrâm* clothes after they stoned Iblis (the devil) at *Jamrah Al-'Aqabah* **[The closest stone pillar to Mecca, known as the Large Jamrah or Jamrah of the supreme devil]** and have put on their usual clothes, whereas others have not yet ended their *Ihrâm* and remained in their *Ihrâm* clothes. We also find that some have covered one shoulder while exposing the other.

Originally, we do so during the first three *shawts,* same as we pace rapidly during the first three *shawts* in *Sa'y* **[The devotional act of walking seven times between the knolls of As̲-S̲afâ and Al-Marwah which are located some distance from the Ka'bah inside Al-Masjidul-Haram; starting at As̲-S̲afâ and ending at Al-Marwa].** During these *shawts* you have to go at a quick pace, an act described as *following the way of As̲-S̲ahâbah* (The Companions), which means to imitate what the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless and grant him peace) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) used to do.

The cause of pacing rapidly in the first three *shawts* has a story behind. The change of climate fatigued the Companions of the Messenger (may Allah bless and grant him peace). Whereupon, the infidels of the Quraish claimed that the fever of *Yathrib* **[The old name of Medina]** exhausted and weakened the Muslims. When the

Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless and grant him peace) heard what they said he wanted to prove the falsehood of the infidels of the Quraish, so he commanded the Companions to uncover one shoulder and quicken their *Sa'y* and *Ifadah Tawâf* during the first three *shawts*, saying to his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all):

"May Allah mercy the one who shows them strength in his self."

Quick pace is neither demanded in the *Arrival Tawâf* **[Pilgrims' first circumambulation of the Ka'bah upon their arrival at Mecca]** nor the *Farewell Tawâf* **[Pilgrims' last circumambulation of the Ka'bah directly before leaving Mecca]**.

In the past, *Al-Mas'â* **[The place where pilgrims walk between the two hills of As-Safâ and Al-Marwah]** was a marketplace affording a place where people could sit and watch the *Sa'y*. You are only obliged to go at a quick pace if the area in front of you is uncrowded. If it is crowded, do not jostle against the others and be gentle to the Muslims around you. Going at a quick pace in *Sa'y* is done between two green marks found in the *Mas'â*.

Generally, the jostlement that causes injury is unwanted. For instance, you crowd at the Black Stone to touch or kiss it. You are asked to crowd in to perform a rite before which the mind pauses meditatively, because it is a proof of your utmost faith and staunch abidance by a deed that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless and grant him peace) performed. But at the same time you are asked not to harm anyone. What exhausts the pilgrims during the performance of the Hajj rituals is the behavior of some pilgrims.

For instance, some prefer to perform *Tawâf* at the narrow side, close to the *Ka'bah*, and do not want to perform it at the wide side, though if each of us circumambulate without trying to outstrip his companion or disturb him or knock against him, everything would go peacefully and smoothly.

A hundred and twenty mercies in the Ka'bah

The Truth, all praise and glory be to Him, intends for us ease, and everyone present in the Meccan Sanctuary is to win a reward. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless and grant him peace) said:

"Verily, Allah sends down in the Sanctuary (the Ka'bah) a hundred and twenty mercies…sixty to the performers of Tawâf [The devotional act of circumambulating the Ka'bah while reciting prayers and supplications], forty to the prayers and twenty to the watchers."

If you just sit looking at the *Ka'bah* mercy will be sent down upon you. When you see the *Ka'bah* and gaze at it all your worries fade away and nothing occupy your mind save Allah, all praise and glory be to Him. If you sit for hours before the *Ka'bah* your eyes will not be diverted away from it, and you will be unable to disengage yourself as long as you are sitting in front of it. If you seek an interpretation, learn that in the human soul are faculties known only to Allah, all praise and glory be to Him.

After finishing the *Ifadah Tawâf,* you perform the Major Ending of *Ihrâm,* after which you become relieved of all the prohibitions of *Ihrâm*. The pilgrim who first performs *'Umrah* (Minor Pilgrimage) **[It consists essentially of Ihrâm, Tawâf (i.e. circumambulation) around the Ka'bah (seven times), and Sa'y (i.e. running) between As-Safâ and Al-Marwah (seven times). It is called minor Hajj since it need not be performed at a particular time of the year and its performance requires fewer ceremonies than the Hajj proper]** then ends his state of *Ihrâm*

and remains in Mecca until the time of Hajj is due and then reassumes *Ihrâm*, is called *Mutamatti'*. The *Mutamatti'* is performing *'Umrah* in the months of Hajj, in other words, combining *'Umrah* and Hajj at the same time, but not with one *Ihrâm*. He assumes *Ihrâm* first for making *'Umrah*, where he performs its *Tawâf* and *Sa'y*, and then ends his state of *Ihrâm* to assume it again at the due time of Hajj. We say that in such case the *Mutamatti'* must slaughter a *Hady* **[A sacrificial animal]** as proven by the Qur'anic verse in which Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, says (what means):

"And whosoever performs the *'Umrah* in the months of *Hajj*, before (performing) the *Hajj*, (i.e. *Hajj-at-Tamattu'* and *Al-Qirân*), he must slaughter a *Hady* such as he can afford." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 196)

Some people say that the sacrifice must be slaughtered in *Minâ*, and others say it should be in Mecca. Some people say it must be before the Hajj, and others say it must be after it.

The Qur'anic text based the slaughtering of sacrifice on the *Tamattu'* form of Hajj **[Performing 'Umrah followed by Hajj during the months of Hajj, but it involves ending the state of Ihrâm for 'Umrah and then reassuming it for Hajj]**. It is even said that you have to execute the slaughtering in the place where you begin your *Tamattu'*, which will be the *Marwah*. For the *Mutamatti'* **[A pilgrim who starts with 'Umrah then performs Hajj later during the months of Hajj]** should slaughter the sacrificial animal in Mecca.

The religious scholars held different opinions regarding *'Umrah*. Some said that it is neither obligatory nor an enjoined duty but a Sunnah, whereas others said that it is obligatory. In my opinion, the religious scholars must convene to settle these matters and reach a unanimous decision.

Those who said that the *'Umrah* is a Sunnah, did not pay heed to the Qur'anic verse in which Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, says (what means):

"And perform properly (i.e. all the ceremonies according to the ways of Prophet Muhammad SAW), the *Hajj* and '*Umrah* (i.e. the pilgrimage to Makkah) for Allâh." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 196)

And the Qur'anic verse in which The Almighty says (what means):

"Verily! As-Safâ and Al-Marwah (two mountains in Makkah) are of the Symbols of Allâh. So it is not a sin on him who perform *Hajj* or *'Umrah* (pilgrimage) of the House (the Ka'bah at Makkah) to perform the going (*Tawâf*) between them (As-Safâ and Al-Marwah). And whoever does good voluntarily, then verily, Allâh is All-Recogniser, All-Knower." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 158)

Why does Allah always follow the Hajj by *'Umrah* and what is the meaning of Hajj and that of *'Umrah*?

The word, 'Hajj' in Arabic literally means 'a resolve,' i.e. to resolve to some magnificent duty. Indeed, the *Shari'ah* **[Islamic Law]** knows nothing greater in the entire universe than the House of Allah. The word Hajj in the Law of Islam means being bound for the House of Allah, in whose regard Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, says (what means):

"And *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka'bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allâh, those who can afford the expenses (for one's conveyance, provision and residence); and whoever disbelieves [i.e. denies *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Makkah), then he is a disbeliever of Allâh], then Allâh stands not in need of any of the 'Alamîn (mankind and jinns)." (Âl-'Imrân, 3: 97)

Thus, Hajj is a visit paid to the House of Allah, and the Hajj is assigned well-known (lunar year) months. The Truth, Whose Majesty reigns supreme, says (what means):

"The *Hajj* (pilgrimage) is (in) the well-known (lunar year) months (i.e. the 10th month, the 11th month and the first ten days of the 12th month of the Islâmic calendar, i.e. two months and ten days). So whosoever intends to perform *Hajj* therein by assuming *Ihrâm*), then he should not have sexual relations (with his wife), nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly during the *Hajj*." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 197)

When we deduce judgments from the Book of Allah, we have to bring all the Qur'anic verses that are related to the subject in question. We cannot take a judgment from a verse while ignoring another. Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, stated the *'Umrah* in conjunction with the Hajj in the Qur'anic verse in which He says (what means), ***'So it is not a sin on him who perform Hajj or 'Umrah (pilgrimage),' (Al-Baqarah, 2: 158)*** and the Qur'anic verse (that means), ***'And perform properly (i.e. all the ceremonies according to the ways of Prophet Muhammad SAW), the Hajj and 'Umrah (i.e. the pilgrimage to Makkah) for Allâh.' (Al-Baqarah, 2: 196).*** Therefore, *'Umrah* must be an enjoined duty and an obligation. In Surat At-Taubah, Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, says (what means):

"And a declaration from Allâh and His Messenger to mankind on the day of the greater Pilgrimage (the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah - the 12th month of Islâmic calendar) that Allâh is free from (all) obligations to the Mushrikûn (see V.2:105) and so is His Messenger." (At-Taubah, 9: 3)

The word greater Hajj lends a feeling that there is another Hajj, but not the greater. Consequently, there is a great Hajj, because what comes next the greater in status is the great.

After the great comes the small. Therefore, there is the greater Hajj and the great Hajj. The Hajj in which all people witness one standing, the Standing at *'Arafah*, is the greater Hajj; because all the pilgrims gather in *'Arafah* at one place and time, but *'Umrah* has no set time.

The performers of *'Umrah* come to perform it throughout the year. They do not gather at one place as on the Day of *'Arafah*. The Qur'anic verse in which Allah, be ever gloried His Majesty and Might, says (what means), ***'And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka'bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allâh,' (Âl-'Imrân, 3: 97)*** is considered in its general sense to denote the great Hajj (i.e., the *'Umrah*) if time is general, and as specifically denoting the greater Hajj, if time is specific.

Offering Prayers outside Al-Masjidul-Haram

We have to understand certain issues related to *Al-Masjidul-Haram* (the Sacred Masjid) during the Hajj season. The Masjid gets overcrowded with pilgrims and many people throng towards the entry and others towards the exit, consequently the comers and goers knock against one another. Some also may not find room for praying inside the Masjid. The reason is that the majority believes that offering prayers within the walls of the Masjid earns a double reward, which is not the case outside.

We correct it by saying, 'If the Masjid got overcrowded and people offered Prayers outside it, where the rows were conjoined outside the Masjid, on the thresholds of its gates, in the streets and the nearby squares in a way that leaves no gap to pass through, it would be like offering Prayers in *Al-Masjidul-Haram*.' Even if they stretched to Sanaa, provided that the rows are not cut.

The pilgrims must be cautioned that in case the Masjid is humming with the prayers and you offered Prayer outside the Masjid you will win the same reward, as long as the rows are conjoined. But with end of the prayers ends the Masjid-like aura of the road.

We have to warn against the habit of reserving places inside *Al-Masjidul-Haram*. Some prayers from the people living in Mecca or other parts reserve places in the first rows. Such places are not rightful to them, because places in the first row belong to the first comers to the Masjid. Generally, the proprieties of the Masjid dictate that each sits beside or behind the first to come. When the first row is completed follows the second, the third, and then the fourth in a way that allows each comer to get the place appropriate for him.

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) forbade reserving places in the Masjid, because it is an attempt to be distinctive in the Divine Presence where all are even. The only reserved place is that of the Imam, for whom a way is made to be able to lead the people in the Congregational Prayers, without crossing over the heads or harming others.

Another thing is the adjusted alignment of rows in the *Ka'bah*. The area close to the *Ka'bah* approximates the shape of a sphere; when the rows extend and Prayers are offered in the corridors, under the pillars and edifices we find that the praying rugs determine the assumed standing position of the prayers. The rugs themselves circle the *Ka'bah*, but in the corridors and passageways we find no rugs.

When the Imam at the *Ka'bah* says, ***'Adjust your rows,'*** it does not mean that rows should be straight, even if the pillars hid the *Ka'bah*. At the *Ka'bah* we not only offer Prayers while turning to the *Ka'bah* but we must see the *Ka'bah* itself before us. People think that adjusting the rows there means the straightness of the rows, which is incorrect, because the *Ka'bah* is the determining factor of your direction in the way that allows you to see the *Ka'bah*. Straightness of rows here should be observed at the side borders of the *Ka'bah*, if you are offering Prayers at the *Ka'bah*. But if you are offering Prayers without seeing the *Ka'bah*, it is enough to just turn to it.

In Hajj there is what we call, 'Needless adherence to acts unobserved in Hajj,' so what is that? When we recite the Qur'anic verse in which The Truth, all praise and glory be to Him, says (what means):

"And take you (people) the *Maqâm* (place) of Ibrâhim (Abraham) [or the stone on which Ibrâhim (Abraham) stood while he was building the Ka'bah] as a place of prayer (for some of your prayers, e.g. two *Rak'at* after the *Tawâf* of the Ka'bah at Makkah)." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 125)

We find that these words seem to bear a command, whereas the actual purport is the opposite, as they convey an allowance. The Qur'anic verse does not mean that solely the *Maqâm* (Station) of Ibrâhîm (Abraham, peace be upon him) **[The step-stone used by Prophet Ibrâhîm during the original construction of the Ka'bah. The stone carries the imprints of his feet, and is housed in a glass enclosure on the north side of the Ka'bah]** is the place of offering Prayers in the *Ka'bah*. But the Station of Ibrâhîm came between the *Ka'bah* and some prayers, who refrained from offering Prayers behind the Station of Ibrâhîm because it separated them from the *Ka'bah*.

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, removed that difficulty through the Qur'anic verse saying (what means), ***"And take you (people) the Maqâm (place) of Ibrâhim (Abraham) [or the stone on which Ibrâhim (Abraham) stood while he was building the Ka'bah] as a place of prayer (for some of your prayers, e.g. two Rak'at after the Tawâf of the Ka'bah at Makkah)." (Al-Baqarah, 2: 125)***. Meaning, it is possible to offer Prayers in that place and nothing is wrong with having the Station of Ibrâhîm coming between you and the *Ka'bah*.

At the end of *Tawâf* **[The devotional act of circumambulating (i.e. walking around) the Ka'bah seven times while reciting prayers and supplications]** people offer the two-*rak'ah* prayer of the Sunnah **[Supererogatory Prayers: A two or four rak'ah Prayer to be performed before and after the Obligatory Prayers. By their virtue man steps closer to Allah and win a great reward. They are among the Prophetic Practices that Muslims follow].** Owing to the great multitudes performing *Tawâf*, that place is intensely crowded especially at the Hajj season. In the fifties, to avoid such great amassment in that place the authorities wanted to transfer the Station of Ibrâhîm from its current place to another far off. The Station of Ibrâhîm at that time had around it buildings and pillars, had a roof and occupied a large space, which rendered the *Tawâf* difficult. They did start in constructing a new station and it was decided that king Al-Saud (may Allah be merciful to him) come to move the Step-stone to the place of the new station. But two days before the transfer a very lengthy telegram was sent to the people in charge signifying that such work is invalid.

An order was issued to suspend working in the new station until the religious scholars pronounce a conclusive decision regarding the content of the telegram. Actually, the religious scholars decided the illegality of transferring the Station of Ibrâhîm from its current place.

Thus, it was decided to demolish the buildings surrounding the Station and to construct a vitrine as large as the stone. It only occupies from the place the space of the footsteps of Ibrâhîm, as currently found and seen, for being one of the Signs that must be witnessed by all the pilgrims journeying to the Sacred House of Allah.

We have to bear in mind that there is no difference in the earned reward, whether performing *Tawâf* and *Sa'y* back and forth the *As-Safâ* and *Al-Marwah* in the first floor, the second or the third. Because the atmosphere is that of the Masjid as high as the seventh heaven and the earth alike, whatever be the depth reached, it is still a Masjid.

We have to talk about *Zamzam* **[The name of the water well that sprang beneath the feet of the Prophet Ismâ'îl (Ishmael, peace be upon him) when he was an infant. It is about 150 kilometers southeast of the Ka'bah]** that typifies a vital issue in the Islamic creed. Regardless of being a healing and a sustenance that satisfies hunger, it symbolizes the Absolute Power of Allah and the total non-reliance on causes. When hajjis drink from it, it reminds them of Allah's Mercy that opens the closed gates when causes no longer avail.

We have to remind that some people underestimate the Hajj rituals, especially in *Minâ* where many of them assign others in throwing the pebbles under the pretext of overcrowding. To them we say, 'Crowd is not accepted as an excuse except if you went to throw the pebbles but you could not.' As aforesaid in the Hajj rituals and in all acts of worship we have to adopt the more reliable and never leave a thing doubted in its abandonment, for Hajj is not an excursion but an act of worship with rites that must be performed or atoned for by a sacrificial animal.

Now that Allah has graced you with a pilgrimage to His Sacred House and performing its rituals, you prepare yourself to pay a visit to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in *Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah* [*Medina, The Lightened City*], which we shall discuss with the Help of Allah in the next chapter.

Chapter Six
Visiting the Messenger of Allah
(May Allah bless him and grant him peace)

The *Farewell Tawâf* **[Pilgrims' last circumambulation of the Ka'bah directly before leaving Mecca; it is also called Tawâf Al-Sadr]** must be the last act you perform in Mecca, before departing to your country or to *Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah [Medina, The Lightened City]*. This *Tawâf* must not be left out except in exceptional circumstances, for it must be performed by everyone, except for the menstruating woman, as it is not asked from her to wait a week till she performs the *Farewell Tawâf*. But as for the *Ifâdah Tawâf* **[Pilgrims' circumambulation of the Ka'bah upon their return from Muzdalifah]** she must wait till she performs it, as it is one of the cornerstones of the Hajj.

The *Farewell Tawâf* raised controversies among Imams, whether it is an act of ***Sunnah*** **[The way of life prescribed as normative in Islam, based on the teachings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and on exegesis of the Noble Qur'an]** or not?

The *Mâliki* [founded by Imam *Mâlik bin Anas* 93-189 A.H.] and the *Hanafi* [founded by Imam *Abu Hanifah Al-Nu'mân* 80-150 A.H.] Juristic Schools judged that it is a Sunnah, while Imam *Ahmad* and *Ash-Shâfi'y*, judged that it is an enjoined duty, but what is the difference between the enjoined duty and the obligation? The enjoined duty is proven by certain undoubted evidence, but as for the obligation it is proven by hypothetical evidence. Only the followers of Imam *Abu Hanifah* differentiate between the duty and the obligation, but for others duty is like obligation.

Why then do not we adopt the more reliable course? Why do not we fully and perfectly perform our rituals, in a way that leaves no doubt? For the one who does not perform the *Farewell Tawâf* must slaughter a sacrifice; he is obliged to offer a ransom, the ransom of *Farewell Tawâf*.

To have the *Tawâf* raised and accepted by Allah, it must be the last ritual you perform before leaving Mecca. Do not perform the *Tawâf* and then stay in Mecca to do some shopping, or sit in a hotel, or try to rearrange your plans and see the gifts you will bring to your relatives and friends. Rather perform the *Tawâf* and then get instantly into the car that will transport you outside Mecca, for there is nothing on the face of the universe higher than the House of Allah.

To all people the Hajj journey is never spiritually complete except by visiting the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in the Lightened City (Medina). Those who arrive a while before the Hajj time, usually go to Medina first, assume the state of *Ihrâm* **[The sacred state of practicing great self-denial into which a Muslim must enter before performing Hajj or 'Umrah, during which certain actions are forbidden (like having conjugal relations, shaving, cutting one's nails, and several other actions) nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly. In this sacred state the dress of Muslim pilgrims consists of two lengths of white cotton, one wrapped around the loins, the other thrown over the left shoulder. Ihrâm clothes for women should fully cover the body except the face, hands and feet]** and then set off to Mecca to perform the Hajj rituals. As for those who only arrive days before the Hajj time, they first perform the Hajj rituals and then go to visit the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in Medina.

Some people say that the Hajj made without visiting the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is judged as if it were not performed, which is an opinion that represents a psychological import and not a legalistic judgment. For the soul that dearly loves the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) does not accept going to Hajj without visiting the beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in Medina. It is a logical matter; the believers love the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, says (what means):

"Say (O Muhammad SAW to mankind): 'If you (really) love Allâh then follow me (i.e. accept Islâmic Monotheism, follow the Qur'ân and the Sunnah), Allâh will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful'" (Âl-'Imrân, 3:31)

The visit is not a cornerstone, but…

The faith of a Muslim is not real true till the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) becomes dearer to the Muslim than his own soul between his two sides of body. This visit though not a cornerstone of the Hajj, constitutes a matter of heart and soul. Allah, Whose Majesty reigns supreme, willed that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) resides in Medina, and he used to tell its inhabitants, ***"I will live with you and will die with you,"*** a prophecy that he would live in Medina and would die there, which Almighty Allah had revealed to him, in order not to contradict the Qur'anic verse in which The Most Exalted says (what means):

"And no soul knows in what land it will die"(Luqmân, 31:34)

It happened at the time when the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) distributed the booty after the Battle of Hunain, that he gave the people but did not give the *Ansâr* (the Supporters). The *Ansâr* felt hurt that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) deprived them from their share in the booty. Thus, the youth among them said, ***'May Allah forgive the Messenger of Allah, blessings and peace be upon him, he gives the Quraish and leaves us, although our swords are dribbling with their blood.'*** Upon hearing this, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) summoned them in his tent and told them, ***'Would it not please you that people go away with sheep and camels while you go with the Messenger of Allah?'*** They answered, ***'Yes.'*** Upon which the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ***'If people pursued a valley and the Ansâr pursued a mountain pass, I would pursue the mountain pass of the Ansâr.'*** Thus, the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) foretold the *Ansâr* that his death would be in Medina.

If someone wondered saying, 'How could this happen when only Allah knows the Unseen.' We answer by saying that it is true that none save Allah knows the Unseen, but Allah reveals it to whomever He wills. Furthermore, Allah ordered His Messenger in the Noble Qur'an to say (what means):

"Nor (that) I know the unseen; nor I tell you that I am an angel." (Al-An'âm, 6:50)

Thus, visiting the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in Medina is not one of the Hajj rituals, but rather one of the properties of Islam.

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, has chosen for His Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to die in Medina as a sign of veneration and an exaltation of his rank, so that his visit would not be secondary to visiting the Sacred House of Allah, but would rather be an independent visit specially paid to him. People thus come to perform Hajj, and after finishing its rituals, they ride in their cars crossing a distance of 500 kilometers through mountains and deserts to visit the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in Medina. They pay the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) a special visit, out of their deep love to him. A visit not made along with another but constitutes the sole purpose, crossing long miles for its sake.

Medina is a Sanctuary

Upon reaching the Lightened City, we also find that the Masjid of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), or the Sanctuary of Medina, has its restrictions same as the Meccan Sanctuary. In the Sanctuary of Medina no contraventions are committed, no hunting of birds, or driving games out of the boundaries of Medina to hunt them. It is also prohibited to cut trees, even if thorny. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, ***"Verily, Ibrâhîm (Abraham, peace be upon him) made Mecca a sanctuary, and I made Medina a sanctuary."***

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) does not speak of his own desire. He alone among all the Prophets was sanctioned to legislate for people. Allah, The Most Exalted, says (what means):

“And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad SAW) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).” (Al-Hashr, 59, 7)

Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, has entrusted His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) with the duty of legislating for people.

The Sanctuary in Medina lies between two of its dark stony grounds (i.e., two mountains) that serve to define its boundaries. One of the two is located near the *Mîqat* **[The place where pilgrims declare their intentions to perform Hajj or ‘Umrah and assume the state of Ihrâm]** at *Abar ‘Ali*, and the next at the other side. Whoever is present between these two signs, is inside the Sanctuary of Medina, and must guard the same discipline observed in the Meccan Sanctuary.

The greeting you give when you enter the Sacred Masjid in Mecca is to perform *Tawâf* around the *Ka’bah*. In the Masjid of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), the greeting is expressed in offering the two-*rak’ah* prayer of saluting a Masjid **[A two-rak’ah prayer offered as a salutation upon entering a Masjid. A rak‘ah is a set of actions that begins with recitation and ends with prostration. It consists of one Bowing and two prostrations with a Sitting in between]**. After the salutation one begins his visit to the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace); a visit full of respect and reverence, where you recall the greatness of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and his highly esteemed place to his Lord. Then, you head towards the compartment, which is the place where the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is buried. There you stand and salute him saying, ***‘Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah,’*** then you salute his two Companions *Abu Bakr* and *‘Umar* (may Allah be pleased with them), who are buried beside the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

We are commanded to salute all who died. On passing by the cemetery we should say, ***'Peace be upon you abodes of believing people. You preceded and we surely by the Will of Allah shall follow you.'***

If the salutation that the dead receive does not excite an emotional reaction, it would be vain. If this were the case with normal human beings, then how would it be with the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)?

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) called upon those killed from amongst the disbelievers in the first battle of faith fought in Badr. He stood, peace be upon him, calling on the disbelievers by their names, asking whether they found true what Allah has promised them. Upon which the Companions asked, ***'O Messenger of Allah! Do you talk to them when they have rotted?'*** He answered, ***'By Allah you are not better hearers (of the words I say) than them, but they do not speak.'***

Some people think that hearing is only with ears, and seeing is only with eyes, which is true in case of the living. But as for the dead it is a different case; for every phase of life has its laws. The worldly life has its own laws, and the *Barzakh* **[The grave as the barrier or the intermediate realm that separates between this world and the other world from the time of death till the time of Resurrection]** life has its own laws too. Also the afterlife has its laws. Man lives by the two laws: that of wakefulness and sleeping. But the law of the sleeping is more transparent than that of wakefulness.

During sleep one can see the dead and talk to them, and see things strange to the world we are living in. How did you see while your eyes are closed? There must be other faculties that can see other than the eyes.

If this happens in the law of sleep, then the law governing death is more transparent than the law of sleep, and Resurrection is the most transparent of all laws.

One should understand that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is never pleased when you raise him to a status higher than his. So never exaggerate as the Christians did with the Prophet 'Îesâ (Jesus, peace be upon him), son of Maryam (Mary, may Allah be pleased with her) [when they deified him]. Just say, ***'Peace, mercy and blessings be upon you, O Messenger of Allah. O seal (the last) of all Messengers and the Mercy of Allah to the world. We testify that you have delivered the Message, conveyed the Trust, and advised the nation.'*** All this should be said in a low voice with no agitation or raising the tone. Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, says (what means):

"O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet (SAW), nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds may be rendered fruitless while you perceive not"(Al-Hujurât, 49:2)

In this place it is demanded that the voice be low, submissive, and mannerly, and there should be no crowding, pushing, fighting, or jostling. You have to recall that you are in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), the noblest among all the Creation of Allah, and the closest to Him. Greeting him is a great honor to you, and by testifying to him, you thus earn his intercession on the Day of Judgment, which is a testimony of truth that he has delivered the Message, conveyed the trust, and advised the nation.

Afterwards, you step towards our master Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), the first Caliph (successor) of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and greet him.

Then, you step towards our master 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the second Caliph, and greet him. After that you can pray Allah while standing near the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as you wish, or as Allah blesses you to say. If someone entrusted you to send his greeting to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) you must fulfill it by saying, 'Peace be upon you, O my master, O Messenger of Allah sent on my behalf and on behalf of (and you name the person),' and then you can pray for whatever you wish.

When standing before the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and greeting him, you should not arrange what you should say, or deliver a speech as the preachers do. For this situation renders the most eloquent speechless, finding nothing to say, but why is that? Because in such a standing you feel that your word power is poorly limited, and you find yourself unable to express the amount of love you bear towards the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Whatever you say, it still will not be enough to pay him due obeisance. Just say, ***'Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah, upon your family and your companions, and upon the Prophets of Allah and His Messengers.'***

You have crossed thousands miles to stand before the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and greet him, so let the greeting you give be full of longing and rich with deep love. Always remember the Qur'anic verse in which Allah, praise and gory be to Him, says (what means):

"If they had only, when they had been unjust to themselves, come to you (Muhammad SAW) and begged Allâh's Forgiveness, and the Messenger had begged forgiveness for them: indeed, they would have found Allâh All-Forgiving (One Who accepts repentance), Most Merciful" (An-Nisâ', 4: 64)

When standing before the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) you should ask him to beg Allah's forgiveness for you, for this is a gate of forgiveness, and ask him that Allah pardons you, for this is a gate of penitence. If you have wronged yourself, you are now standing before the shrine of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

In such imposing and awe-inspiring situations one does not help but feel submissive, and turn to Allah heart and soul begging Him to put on his tongue what pleases Him and His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and draws him closer to Them. He begs Allah to grant him continuous success by the grace of continuing to perform Hajj and 'Umrah, and to teach him the display of good manners in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and in his entire blessed City.

The following is the supplication of a worshipper, who said it before the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), which is considered an ideal example to the way supplication should be:

"My Lord, in the name of Muhammad's honorable place and rank to You, Your Love to him, his love to You and the secret between You and him I beg that you bestow your Blessings and Peace upon Your Messenger and his family. O Allah! Make us love him the more, inform us of his right, guide us to follow him, adopt his manners and Sunnah and grant us the joy of enjoying his presence and the delight of talking to him. Remove all the barriers, mediators, and veils. Please our ears with hearing his pleasant kind words. Make us deserving to receive from him and follow him. Make our prayers for the bestowal of peace upon him a streaming light that blows out all darkness and injustice, all doubts and atheism, all falsehood and negligence. Make it the means to rise to the highest ranks of monotheism, leaving no trace within us of worshipping a

god but You, for us to deserve standing in Your Presence and Your special Favor, while holding fast to the Prophet's model behavior, blessings and peace be upon him, and to the strong Robe (of Allah, i.e. the Noble Qur'ân). And to obtain from You, O Lord, and from your Patronage the success in worldly and religious affairs."

In Medina you must care to stay as much as you can in the Masjid of the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and to occupy yourself only with worshipping. When you finish praying, start glorifying Allah (by saying *Subhân Allah* i.e., glorified be Allah), then you can start supplicating blessings on the Messenger of Allah, then pray for yourself and whomever you like.

Beware not to occupy yourself with anything other than worship, and devote all your thoughts to Allah and His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and never enter into any worldly discussions, or else you would commit a grave sin.

Those who discuss worldly matters inside the Masjid of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) are to be afflicted with painful torment, and will lose their whole world. If you are bound for the Masjid of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) it should be for offering prayers.

After ending your prayers start reciting the Noble Qur'an, recite as much as you can, for reciting the Noble Qur'an in the presence of the one to whom it was revealed inspires feelings of submission, reverence, and awe only experienced by those who sit reciting the Noble Qur'an in the Masjid of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

In the Holy Garden

Do not miss the chance of sitting in the Holy Rawdah (garden), for the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said about it, ***"Between my tomb and pulpit is a garden from the gardens of Paradise."***

You can easily know its place inside the Masjid of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), for it is distinctly marked. But you have to arrive early, because everyone is so keen to sit in the Holy Rawdah. If you succeeded to sit in the Rawdah, offer prayers, recite the Noble Qur'an and celebrate the Praises of Allah, for as long as you are in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) you must dedicate yourself to worship.

Always engage yourself with the hereafter, with the everlasting coming life. Before stepping inside the Masjid divest yourself of worldly life and concerns, exactly as you take off your shoes, and do not let any of them accompany you inside. For in this blessed place the worship is accepted and it is doubly rewarded, and supplications are answered, as the gates of heavens are always wide-open. Thus, do not waste your time with anything that may distract you away from Allah and His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

The more you sit in the Masjid of the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), the more you fill your soul with the whiffs of faith, that you may not understand but rather sense.

The more time you spend there, the closer you step towards Allah and His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and indeed the further you move away from sins. After your sojourn comes to an end, and you want to bid farewell, as you

performed the *Farewell Tawâf* **[Pilgrims' last circumambulation of the ka'bah directly before leaving Mecca]** in Mecca, go inside and greet the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and make it the last thing you do in Medina.

Our Imam 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) taught us, from the proprieties of taking leave, what to say when bidding farewell to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace):

"Peace be upon you, O my master, O Messenger of Allah, sent on my behalf and on behalf of your daughter residing in your proximity, quick to join you. Peace be upon you both, a farewell bid neither by a non-loving nor a weary person. Sincerely, we leave not because of boredom and we depart not mistrusting the Promise Allah has made to his patient servants."

Or utter any other supplication conveying the same meaning and ask to return time and again to pay a visit to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as long as Allah keeps you alive.

<u>Here the Noble Qur'an was revealed</u>

In the Masjid of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) there are many blessed places. Among them are the place that witnessed the descent of the Divine Inspiration on the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and the place that witnessed the faith gatherings between the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and Angel Jibrîl (Gabriel, peace be upon him).

Visit this place, which is pinpointed, and offer a two-rak'ah prayer there, then sit for a while, and contemplate the incidents that this place had witnessed, where the law of Heaven descended to earth. Think how difficult it was for a human to meet an angel, to the extent that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) used to hear clattering like the sound of bells, or like the buzzing of bees. He used to drip with sweat during the coldest days and say, ***'Wrap me up, wrap me up.'*** When the Prophet's noble leg touched that of any of the Companions during the descent of the Divine Inspiration, the man felt as if it were a mountain due to its heaviness. And when the Divine Inspiration came to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) while riding his camel, it became unable to walk, or even to stand on its legs, but only to kneel on the ground.

You will see yourself the place of the descent of the Divine Inspiration inside the Masjid of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and you can sit in it contemplating the blessings that used to occur in this place, and the Book (the Noble Qur'an) that was sent down to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) guidance and mercy to the whole world.

There stretch out your hands and pray to Allah, for it is a place where supplications are answered, then you can sit down as long as you wish at the place of the descent and perform the five obligatory Prayers if you can.

Your visit to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) must not end here, but you have to sense the greatness of Islam by visiting the scene that witnessed the Battle of Badr, the battle by which Allah has freed truth from falsehood, and made truth triumph over the leaders of disbelief.

You will find the place as it is, and you can see where the soldiers of Islam used to stand, and the post of the disbelievers, also the graves of the Muslims who were martyred in the Battle of Badr.

This place will remind you of an important event in the history of Islam, which is the first victory of faith over disbelief, of freedom over slavery, and the Religion of Allah over idolatry. This land was honored by the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and his Companions (may Allah be mercy to them), and was honored by the blood of the Muslim martyrs.

We then move from Badr to Uhud, the battle that took place at Uhud Mount, when the archers disobeyed the command of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), and did not listen to his instructions to stay in their positions above Uhud, but they abandoned their posts and descended to get their share from the spoils, upon which the Muslims were defeated. For Allah would not grant them victory when they disobeyed the command of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Recite the Qur'anic verse in which Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, says (what means):

"(And remember) when you ran away (dreadfully) without even casting a side glance at anyone, and the Messenger (Muhammad SAW) was in your rear calling you back. There did Allâh give you one distress after another by way of requital to teach you not to grieve for that which had escaped you, nor for that which had befallen you. And Allâh is WellAware of all that you do."(Âl-'Imrân, 3:152)

And there you will find the grave of Hamzah, the master of the martyrs (may Allah be pleased with him), where the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) stood and recited the following noble Qur'anic verse (saying what means):

"Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allâh [i.e. they have gone out for Jihâd (holy fighting), and showed not their backs to the disbelievers], of them some have fulfilled their obligations (i.e. have been martyred), and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed [i.e. they never proved treacherous to their covenant which they concluded with Allâh] in the least."(Al--Ahzâb, 33:23)

This is the vivid history of Islam, alive in Medina; a history that stands a witness on every incident that occurred, still present with its scenes and the haven of its martyrs. Even the Masjid with the two *Qiblahs* **[Direction faced in prayers]**, where the Muslims used to offer prayers with their faces directed towards Jerusalem, and then a Divine Order was sent to turn the *Qiblah* towards Mecca; all this is present in Medina, the alive history of Islam. Almighty Allah decreed to keep that history bearing witness for Islam, the last of all religions, before all generations. For Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is the only Prophet whose place of burial is surely known, and Islam is the only religion whose incidents are precisely recorded, an open book to anyone who pursues truth.

We have to contemplate these places and scenes to draw moral lessons and wisdoms, for it is the best provision for this life and the hereafter.

We beg Allah, all praise and glory be to Him, to destine for us performing Hajj and 'Umrah several times, and accept them from us. To forgive our sins, accept our repentance, and in our hearts dwells the love of the House of Allah and His Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Indeed, Allah is the Best to answer prayers, and may the Blessings and Peace of the Almighty be ever bestowed upon our master Muhammad, his family and Companions.

Glossary

'Arafah (The area that surrounds Mount Rahmah, southeast of Mecca; Standing at `Arafah on the 9TH of Dhul-Hijjah and staying there from mid-day to sunset is the essence of the Hajj)

Al-Baitul-Ma'mûr (The Oft-frequented House) (The house in the seventh firmament directly above the Ka`bah at Mecca; everyday it is visited by seventy thousands angels, who never revisit it until the Day of Judgment)

Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah (Medina, The Lightened City)

Al-Mash'ar Al-Haram (The Sacred Monument: the hill in *Muzdalifah* where pilgrims should supplicate Allah after they have spent the night at Muzdalifah, and after which they should go to Mecca to throw *Jamarat Al-`Aqabah* (the closest stone pillar to Mecca) on the morning of the tenth of *Dhu'l–Hijjah*)

As-Safâ and Al-Marwah (Two hillocks near the Ka`bah between which Hagar ran in search of water for her son)

As-Safâ (Name of the hillock where a Muslim begins Sa`y. It is about 200 meters southeast of the Ka`bah)

Al-Marwa (Name of the hillock where a Muslim ends his last lap of Sa`y. It is 250 meters northeast of the Ka`bah)

Barzakh (The grave as the barrier or the intermediate realm that separates between this world and the other world from the time of death till the time of Resurrection)

The Day of Tarwaiyah (The 8th day of *Dhul-Hijjah*, signifying the start of Hajj. The pilgrim proceeds to Minâ on this day)

The Day of 'Arafah (The 9th day of *Dhul-Hijjah*, standing at `Arafah on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah and staying there from mid-day to sunset is the essence of the Hajj)

The Day of Nahr (The 10th day of the *Dhul-Hijjah* on which pilgrims slaughter their sacrifices)

Days of Tashreeq (The 11th, 12th, and 13th days of the month of *Dhul-Hijjah*. On these days, the pilgrim throws pebbles at the stone pillars, a ritual known as *Rammy*, in Minâ)

Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah through verbal or mental repetition of His Divine Attributes or various religious formulas, such as `*Subhân Allah*,' meaning `All Glory be to Allah')

Eidul-Adhâ (A four-day festival that completes the rites of pilgrimage and takes place on the 10th-13th of Dhul Hijjah (the 10th is the day of Nahr and 11th-13th are the days of Tashriq). Literally means `the feast of the sacrifice.' This feast commemorates the Prophet Ibrahim's obedience to Allah by being prepared to sacrifice his only son Ismâ`îl, peace be on both of them)

Farewell Hajj (The first and the last Hajj performed by the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace)

Hady (An animal (a camel, a cow, a sheep or a goat) offered as a sacrifice by the pilgrims)

Al-Hajarul-Aswad (The Black Stone) (A stone from Paradise. It was set into one corner of the Ka`bah in Mecca by Prophet Ibrâhîm (peace be upon him). The Black Stone was personally installed in the wall of the Ka`bah by the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) himself during its reconstruction following its destruction by a flash flood. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also kissed it during his Farewell Hajj. Thus, touching and kissing *Al-Hajarul-Aswad* during `Umrah and Hajj is considered Sunnah and an act of obedience. Muslims do not worship the Black

Stone. The only reason to kiss the Black Stone is that our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) kissed it)

Al-Hajj Al-Mabrûr (A Hajj that is accepted by Allah because of its perfection in both inward intention and outward observance of the traditions of the Messenger Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace)

Hajjul-Ifrâd (Single form of Hajj: Performing Hajj without making \`Umrah)

Hajjul-Qirân (Combined form of Hajj: Performing \`Umrah and Hajj with one *Ihrâm* during the months of Hajj i.e., the 10th month, the 11th month and the first ten days of the 12th month of the Islamic calendar)

Hajjul-Tamatt'u (Interrupted form of Hajj: Performing \`Umrah followed by Hajj during the months of Hajj, but it involves ending the state of *Ihrâm* for \`Umrah and then reassuming it for Hajj)

Hatîm (The area adjacent to the Ka\`bah on its west side, enclosed by a low semi-circular wall. Tradition has it that Hajar (wife of Prophet Ibrâhîm (peace and blessings be upon him)) is buried in this enclosure. It is highly recommended that the pilgrim offer Sunnah Prayer and supplications to Allah in this area. However, this is not a part of the official rites of Hajj)

Ihrâm (The sacred state of practicing great self-denial into which a Muslim must enter before performing Hajj or \`Umrah, during which certain actions are forbidden (like having conjugal relations, shaving, cutting one's nails, and several other actions) nor commit sin, nor dispute unjustly. In this sacred state the dress of Muslim pilgrims consists of two lengths of white cotton, one wrapped around the loins, the other thrown over the left shoulder. *Ihrâm* clothes for women should fully cover the body except the face, hands and feet)

Ijtihad (Term designating the intellectual effort of Muslim scholars to employ reason and analysis of the authoritative sources (Qur'an and Sunnah) for the purpose of finding legal solutions to new and challenging situations or issues)

Al-Isrâ' (the Night Journey) (The miraculous night journey during which the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was taken from Al-Masjid Al-Harâm (at Mecca) to the farthest masjid (in Jerusalem))

Jamarat (The three stone pillars in Minâ that symbolically represent the locations where the devil (Shaitan) tried to tempt Prophet Ibrahim (peace and blessings be upon him) away from the path of Allah. The pilgrim stones these pillars on the 10th through the 13th of Dhul-Hijjah in commemoration of the rejection of the devil by Prophet Ibrâhîm and of his steadfastness to the cause of Allah. The Jamarat are located within a few hundred feet of one another in a line and are named as follows:)

Jamrat Al-'Aqabah or Al-Jamrah Al-Kubrâ (The last stone pillar in the line)

Al-Jamrah Al-Ulâ (The first stone pillar in the line)

Al-Jamrah Al-Wustâ (The second (middle) stone pillar in the line)

Lailatul-Qadr (The night of Al-Qadr is either indicative of the honor and station of that night, thus meaning `An honorable night', or the word `Al-Qadr' may also refer to the ordainment and disposal of affairs. So it would mean `the night in which all that will occur in the following year will be decreed,' following the Qur'anic Statement of Allah saying (what means), *'Therein (on that night) is decreed every matter of ordainment.'* (Ad-Dukhân, 44: 4) *Lailatul-Qadr* is concealed in one of the odd nights in the last ten days of Ramadan; the Noble Qur'an was sent down in the Night of *Al-Qadr* and the Qur `an itself describes as `Better than a thousand months')

Maqâm (Station) of Ibrâhîm (The step-stone used by Prophet Ibrâhîm during the original construction of the Ka`bah. The stone carries the imprints of his feet, and is housed in a glass enclosure on the north side of the Ka`bah)

Minâ (An area close to Mecca on the road to `Arafah where pilgrims spend the *Tashreeq* days. It is the place of throwing pebbles at Jamarat and ritual slaughter of the sacrificial animal)

Miqât (An imaginary boundary around Mecca. A prospective pilgrim cannot cross this boundary without first assuming *Ihrâm*. This boundary is anchored by different townships and localities in different directions (Dhul-Hulaifah in the north, Yalamlam in the southeast, Dhatu-`Irq in the northeast, Al- Juhfah in the northwest, Qarnul-Manazil in the east). The pilgrim assumes *Ihrâm* at or before the *miqât* and pronounces his intention to perform `Umrah or Hajj. For people permanently living inside the *miqât*, their place of residence is their *miqât*)

Al-Mi'râj (the Ascension to Heaven) (The miraculous ascension of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, from Jerusalem to the Heavens to meet his Lord)

Months of Hajj (The months of *Shawwal*, *Dhul-Q`idah* and the first ten days of *Dhul Hijjah*, i.e. two months and ten days)

Muzdalifah (A desert location approximately midway between Minâ and `Arafah. The pilgrim spends the night of the 10th of *Dhul-Hijjah* there)

Nahr (To slaughter a camel, sheep, goat or cow in the name of Allah, for the pleasure of Allah. This act is performed to commemorate Prophet's Ibrâhîm act of sacrificing his son - Prophet Ismâ`îl - on the command of Allah. But Allah ransomed him with a great sacrifice (i.e. a ram))

Niyyah (Intention. When a person is performing pilgrimage, he/she has to set the intention. All acts of worship are preceded by an appropriate niyyah)

Rak'ah (The prayer of Muslims consists of Rak`ât or Rak`ahs (singular-rak`ah). Rak`ah represents a unit of the Prayer and consists of one standing, one bowing and two prostrations with a sitting in between)

Rammy (The act of symbolically stoning the devil (shaitan) in Minâ on the 10th through to the 13th of *Dhul-Hijjah*. This commemorates the tradition that Prophet Ibrâhîm (peace and blessings be upon him) was tempted three times by the devil but rejected all three of the devil's attempts by stoning him and driving him away. These three locations are symbolized by three stone pillars (Jamarat) in Minâ)

Rammy of Jamarat (Stoning of the specified pillars in Minâ)

Sa'y (The devotional act of walking seven times between the knolls of As-Safâ and Al-Marwah, which are located some distance from the Ka`bah inside Al-Masjidul-Haram; starting at As-Safâ and ending at Al-Marwa)

Shahâdah (The testimony of Faith: Lâ ilâh illâ Allah wanâ Muhammadan rasûl Allah, There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah)

Shawt (One complete circuit around the Ka`bah constitutes a shawt (pl. ashwaat), and seven ashwaat complete one Tawâf)

Syrian Corner (The north corner of the Ka`bah)

Talbiyah (A formula of answering Allah's Call for Hajj by saying: *Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik. Labbaik, La Shareek Laka, Labbaik. Innal Hamdah, Wan Nematah, Laka wal Mulk, La Shareek Laka Labbaik* Here I am at Your service O Allah, here I am. Here I am at Your service, You have no partner, here I am. Yours alone is All

Praise and All Bounty, and Yours alone is The Sovereignty. You have no partner)

Tawâf (The devotional act of circumambulating (i.e., walking around) the Ka`bah seven times while reciting prayers and supplications. Tawâf should begin and end at the Black Stone)

Tawaful-Qudum (Arrival Tawaf: Pilgrim's first circumambulation of the ka`bah upon their arrival at Mecca. It is the first of the three mandatory Tawâf in Hajj.)

Tawaful-Ifada (Pilgrim's circumambulation of the ka`bah upon their return from *Muzdalifah*. This Tawaf is a pillar of Hajj and Hajj is not accomplished without it. It is the second of the three mandatory Tawâf in Hajj)

Tawaful-Wada' or Tawaful-Sadr (Farewell Tawâf: Pilgrims' last circumambulation of the Ka`bah directly before leaving Mecca, This Tawaf is for taking leave and it signifies the completion of Hajj. It is the last of the three mandatory Tawâf in Hajj)

Tawaful-Nafl (Supererogatory Tawâf: A devotional Tawaf you may perform any time, and as many times as, you wish. No *Ihrâm* is required for this Tawaf)

Tawaful-'Umrah (The Tawaf performed as a rite of `Umrah)

'Umrah ('Umrah (Minor Pilgrimage) is an Islamic rite and consists of pilgrimage to the Ka`bah. It consists essentially of Ihrâm, Tawâf (i.e. circumambulation) around the Ka`bah (seven times), and Sa`y (i.e. running) between *As-Safâ* and *Al-Marwah* (seven times). It is called minor Hajj since it need not be performed at a particular time of the year and its performance requires fewer ceremonies than the Hajj proper)

Yamani Corner (The southern corner of the Ka`bah)

Yathrib (The old name of Medina)

Zamzam (The spring of water that sprang forth miraculously under the feet of the infant Isma`il (peace and blessings be upon him) during his mother's frantic search for water between As-Safâ and Al-Marwah. Zamzam is now enclosed in a marble chamber in the Ka`bah)

Supplication

"My Lord, in the name of Muhammad's honorable place and rank to You, Your Love to him, his love to You and the secret between You and him I beg that you bestow your Blessings and Peace upon Your Messenger and his family. O Allah! Make us love him the more, inform us of his right, guide us to follow him, adopt his manners and Sunnah and grant us the joy of enjoying his presence and the delight of talking to him. Remove all the barriers, mediators, and veils. Please our ears with hearing his pleasant kind words. Make us deserving to receive from him and follow him. Make our prayers for the bestowal of peace upon him a streaming light that blows out all darkness and injustice, all doubts and atheism, all falsehood and negligence. Make it the means to rise to the highest ranks of monotheism, leaving no trace within us of worshipping a god but You, for us to deserve standing in Your Presence and Your special Favor, while holding fast to the Prophet's model behavior, blessings and peace be upon him, and to the strong Robe (of Allah, i.e. the Noble Qur'ân). And to obtain from You, O Lord, and from your Patronage the success in worldly and religious affairs."